



Alternate Names:

Hunting of the Shaded Guardian, 玄日狩

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Comedy, Shounen, Action, Martial Arts, Sci-fi, Drama

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Summary:

The school life of a cyborg, programmed to protect his overprotective

older brother and ordered to conceal his identity from his classmates.

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Translators:

<http://novel.oddsquad.org/>

Vol 1 - Chapter 1 - 8 + Character Intro

Vol 2 - Chapter 1 - 8 + Extra 1

Vol 3 - Chapter 1 - 10 + Extra 2

Vol 4 - Chapter 1 - 10

Vol 5 - Chapter 1 - 9 + AfterWord



## Eclipse Hunter Prologue

In 2105, following the decline of nations, the world was split into hundreds of trading organisations. Motivated by the benefits, these organisations merged to form trade cartels, the largest of which was the Solaris group, controlling over 30% of the world's economy. The group was also acknowledged to have the most proficient leader in the world.

The Solaris group was never among the top five trade cartels until the leadership went to Devon Solaris, whose insatiable thirst for power lead him to continually expand his influence...

It wasn't that the growth of the Solaris group went unchallenged. The Solaris Emperor would always be one step ahead of the opposition. He was able to stop their threats before they were ever acted upon. It was as if he was able to foresee danger. Those who attempted to plot against him would find themselves easily outwitted. Everyone would lament how they got so close to defeating him, only to be defeated at the last moment.

It wasn't just once or twice; it was the same for every attempt. Everyone knew it wasn't just a coincidence, nor was it God's will. It was because the Solaris Emperor had complete control.

Every opponent who crossed his path swore to never do it again.

Everyone admitted that he had complete control over everything. No schemes nor conspiracy could escape him.

His very existence was likened to God.

He was invincible.

People called this legendary existence the 'Solaris Emperor'.

"But the origin of each noble achievement is often beyond simple."

\*\*\*\*\*Prologue END\*\*\*\*\*

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 1

A middle-aged man sat at a black office desk, clearly the most important one in the room. Despite the grey tint to the man's hair, he still maintained a handsome face. Before him were several other desks, each equipped with a computer. Financial reports were tacked on the walls of this room, displaying economic growth trends and other major exports and imports.

However, this large room was empty at that moment and the man's countenance seemed nothing like that of a top executive. He stared blankly ahead, as if awaiting something. At that instant, the ornately carved, ebony wood doors slowly swung inwards. In the era of modern technology, automatic doors were seen as a basic commodity. Even working class households had no need to move their arms to open doors.

Therefore, these doors were amongst the man's most prized possessions. But at that moment, he would much rather have had an automatic door which slid open in an instant, than the agonizingly slow pace at which the doors creaked open, sending shivers down his spine. Even though he could guess who was behind it, he was still hoping he was wrong.

Devon1 Solaris strolled into the room with a grace that seemed to say that the whole world stood at his feet. He had an aura of complete superiority which could force even the toughest to yield even though there wasn't the slightest trace of hostility in his gaze. His perfect expression betrayed no emotion; his captivating looks, slender frame and overflowing charisma made people fall to their knees in worship. This had become especially apparent ever since he took over his father's position and became a key player in the financial world. As the influence

of the Solaris Federation expanded, he garnered looks of awe and admiration from every member of the conglomerate.

Gazing at the striking figure before him, the older man could not help but feel a surge of pride, despite the current situation. This was his very own son, his own flesh and blood, the son he had brought up to become the perfect Solaris Emperor.

After having dominated the financial world for years and having the perfect son, this man had no regrets, at this moment he simply felt puzzled.

"Why would you wish to kill me? You should know that you are my one and only son. I may possess some of the shares of this conglomerate, but that will be left to you anyway."

"Your one and only son? Is that what you believed all along? Is that how it was?" the slender figure shook with anger he had never felt before. Even his eyes became bloodshot.

"So... you already know?" the man behind the desk realised what this was about and regained his composure.

"'You already know?' Father, is that all you are thinking? Why are you being so cruel to him?" Grief filled his voice.

"My whole life I have dearly loved your mother. But he killed her." There was nothing but indifference in his voice.

"Lies! Mother died of childbirth, how could you blame him?"

The older man did not reply, and simply looked at Devon silently without showing a hint of regret in his eyes. The sight only served to fuel the younger man's rage and anguish. His father loved his mother deeply and this love had never faded, even after her death. This would have made any child proud, but not when it hurt someone.

Was his father wrong? He found it difficult to blame him.

His father has always been very attentive to Devon. He never forgot his birthdays and whenever Devon wanted something, his father never disappointed him, that is, until that request he made on his eighteenth birthday.

"I want my little brother."

That was six years ago. Ever since then, Devon had made that exact request over and over again. It was different from the usual requests a child would make, he was not asking his parents to have another child, because Devon already had a little brother. A very cute one at that. When they were little, he used to love pinching the kid's cheeks until he started protesting. Somehow, he could never really comprehend how his father could come to hate such a cute kid.

Why did his father refuse to acknowledge his little brother's existence? It was not until he was older that Devon realised that the expression his father always wore in the child's presence was that of hatred. Even the nanny responsible for his care was there solely for monetary gain. So it was entirely up to Devon to give the child the love and care he needed.

Any other child would have been on bad terms with his siblings as they would vie for his parents' affections. But Devon's situation was different. It was obvious that his father hated his younger brother and even discouraged Devon from visiting him. He was taboo among the household and was never present in any of the family photos.

The nanny was well aware that the father loathed the child and never dared to bring him out of the room. And thus, Daren2 Solaris had lived in that attic as long as he could remember. Since his father was fond of antiques, he had his home designed in the image of a castle. So the attic was far removed from the main hall.

Devon could no longer remember why he had walked all the way there back then. His only vague recollection was that of a baby's loud wails leading him up a staircase, and through a wooden door. The room had been dark and the light switch was nowhere to be found. The cries coming from the room were unrelenting and Devon was very scared at the time. He felt something tugging his trousers and the noise suddenly stopped.

Alarmed, Devon kicked the thing away and the crying resumed. He hastily retreated to the wall behind him and bumped into the light switch. As the room became bright, he found himself looking at a baby crying loudly, with a huge bruise on his forehead.

Obviously, this kid was the one tugging on his trousers, and that bruise was the result of Devon's kick.

Devon fretted as he ran to the little baby to check if he was alright. From what he had learnt, babies are usually very fragile. The moment he extended his hands to the baby, it stopped crying. Big watery eyes stared

back at him and the child cooed as two tiny hands grabbed his own.

Such small hands, Devon thought. His ten year old self had always found his father's hand to be quite big when compared to his own. And yet, compared to the infant in front of him, his own hand seemed large.

The baby suddenly shoved Devon's thumb to his tiny mouth and started sucking on it as hard as he could.

Hungry? Sadly you are not going to get any milk no matter how hard you try. He did not know if he should laugh or cry at this ridiculous situation.

He helplessly searched the room for milk powder and once he found it, he began preparing milk for the child. He failed several times. The milk was either too hot or he had not put enough milk powder in it, causing the baby to cry loudly. By the time he had succeeded, the baby was starving. He held onto the bottle with his small hands and drank hungrily while staring straight at the person holding him with his swollen eyes.

Finally, after two whole bottles of milk, the baby was satisfied and its big watery eyes slowly became heavy in Devon's warm embrace. He tried to place the baby on the bed, but once he let go the baby started crying its lungs out. With no other choice, he settled by the bed and sacrificed a finger for the baby's tiny hands to hold on to. And thus the baby finally fell asleep peacefully.

It was then that Devon started thinking that this baby should be his little brother. The one that his mother died to give birth to, and hated by father. Devon should have felt hate towards this child too.

However, gazing at the tiny baby in its peaceful sleep and feeling its firm grip on his finger, Devon could only think of the child as the most innocent being on earth. Even without anyone telling him to, Devon knew he should treasure his little brother.

"Didi<sup>3</sup>, you have to quickly learn how to call me 'gege<sup>4</sup>'."

Devon was very excited at the thought of the little creature calling him big brother. Sure enough, his wish came true. Some time in the future, the first word the baby would utter was not the usual "mama" or "papa", but "gege".

Ever since his discovery, Devon had frequented the attic almost every day to play with his little brother for at least one hour. His father had disapproved but there was little he could do against Devon's persistence.

And so he watched his little brother grow up. He was there when the child uttered his first words and when he took his first steps. Didi liked to read picture books, and loved ripping them. He liked to play ball games and loved to smash Devon's face with the ball. Soon didi started to learn how to write and because his father refused to find a tutor for him, it was Devon himself that taught his little brother how to read and write...

All was well until the year Devon turned seventeen and his little brother was only seven. Their father sent didi away, claiming that he was sending him to one of the best royal colleges for schooling. Devon had been reluctant and wondered why he was allowed to have home tutors while his little brother had to be sent to a place so far away. But he had not given it much thought, naively believing that his father would surely act

in his little brother's best interests, after all Daren was his son too.

"No! I don't want to go!"

Didi was extremely frightened at that time and had tightly hung onto Devon's waist. The strength of the seven year old had nearly strangled him then. Devon had tried multiple times to convince his brother, knowing full well that he was afraid of their father. In the end, Devon had had to make a few promises in order to reassure him.

"Don't be scared, didi. You still have your older brother. I will protect you."

"Gege will protect me?" Didi pouted and extended his little finger. "Then let's make a deal, if gege lied then... you have eat a lot of bitter melon which gege hates."

Devon smiled in embarrassment as he hooked his little finger with didi's. "Alright, alright. If I am lying to you, I will have to eat a lot of bitter melon."

Just like that the little boy agreed to go with his father. As he walked away, he turned multiple times to look at his elder brother. He had been extremely frightened of their father who had held his hand so coldly...

That scene had always remained in Devon's mind. Every time he recalled it, he blamed himself for not noticing the coldness in his father's eyes and hated himself for neglecting his little brother because he was too busy playing around in his teenage years. When a whole six months

went by and didi was still not home for summer vacation, Devon finally asked his father about him. His father had replied in an uninterested voice that the school Daren went to did not have holidays and students were not allowed to come home until they graduated

"Which school is this?"

Of course he had not believe it. Didi did not phone him at all during the last six months, even though Devon gave him his phone number. How could a child who is so attached to his older brother not call him up even once?

His father had not given him an answer, and it was then that comprehension dawned on him. There was no way that his little brother had been sent to such a school. It was all a part of his father's plan to get rid of an unwanted eyesore.

Devon did not dare to imagine what might have happened to his little brother. He went berserk searching for the boy. He went through the whole family, the whole city... the whole country...

Drowning in self-hate, he joined the Solaris Federation and took over most of the human resources within a year, just so he could search for his little brother. However, it was not enough. Just like that, didi disappeared from his world without a trace.

In the course of time, Devon managed to take over every part of the Solaris Federation. He garnered enough power and influence to buy up smaller trading organisations and turn Solaris into one of the five greatest trade cartels. He did all this just so he could get better access to

the Census and other records regarding orphans, criminals, prisoners, and even unidentified corpses...

On every one of his birthdays, Devon had pleaded for the return of his little brother but his father had disappointed him each time. But on his most recent (24th) birthday, he had a different request. He demanded his father's permission to excavate the mansion and this time, his father agreed.

The castle-like mansion was enormous so Devon was forced to find a few hundred people to carry out the excavation. Complex feelings coursed through him as he waited day and night for something to be dug up. He refused to think about the initial suspicion that had compelled him to lead the excavation and what it would mean if something was actually dug up. The search had gone on for six years and Devon was weary.

If father has truly... then it would be best to begin the revenge for my little brother.

But nothing had turned up and although Devon sighed in relief, he now had to continue his fruitless search.

Seven years had passed since didi's disappearance and Devon could wait no longer. His little brother would have been fifteen by now. Between his father and little brother, he knew right from the start whom he would pick. The seven years worth of delay was only because of his love for his father.

"Where is my little brother?" Devon demanded. He held a hand gun in

his hands, the very latest of its kind, and pointed it straight at his father. There was no trace of emotion left in his eyes. He had already betrayed his little brother's trust, his beloved didi was missing and he had no idea whether he was alive or not. The regret he carried for seven years had slowly worn away every bit of the love he had had for his father.

The elderly man at gun point now looked at him unwaveringly and even smiled a little, "Actually, I'm giving him to you for your 25th birthday!"

Devon was stunned. He did not think he would get a straight answer from father so easily. Or was it simply a ploy to avoid death at Devon's hands?

His father stood up. "Don't move!" Devon snapped, his voice sounding even colder than before. "I might not kill you before you tell me what happened to didi, but that doesn't mean I won't cripple you."

"Calm down, child. I only wanted you to see your beloved little brother." The elderly man slowly walked over to a door. Devon hesitated since he knew that door led to his father's restroom.

His father opened the door and gestured for him to follow him in. Devon hesitated again, but not because he was scared. Even if didi was all the way down in hell, he would not hesitate to jump in. It was just that he could not bear another wave of disappointment. Didi has been missing for 7 whole years and Devon had already searched through every territory occupied by the Solaris Federation. How could he bring himself to believe that his little brother would be in that rest room...?

Nevertheless, Devon entered. His father walked into the bathroom

within the large rest room and stood before the simple bathtub, wash sink and toilet. His smile was spine-chilling. "Child, it no matter how smart you were, you were never able to guess that this very rest room which I frequently visited was the place you were searching for all this time."

Devon was dumbfounded, he stared at his father as the man turned the tap on the bath tub. No water came out, but instead the whole bath tub descended, leaving behind a flight of stairs. This unremarkable place with such simple functions managed to fool him for seven years. Devon suspected that there would be hidden pathways in the castle and had long since searched through them all. But he never suspected that there could be one here.

It was risky to have the tap act as the switch. If someone happened to come here and turn on the tap, the passage would have easily been discovered. But this faulty idea was surprisingly effective. When searching for hidden switches, no one would bother to investigate an exposed tap.

Like his father, Devon liked using things that belonged to him and him alone. And so, even though only Devon and his father was permitted to use this rest room, he had never stepped into the place since it belonged to his father.

Devon had spent all these years searching for his little brother, only to find him hidden right under his nose. It was such a cruel reality. Devon prayed that this was not his little brother's grave. If the boy was even barely alive, with current technology, he could find a way for him to return to the original health.

Perhaps his father knew that Devon would not be foolish enough to

step in first, so he entered the hidden pathway without hesitation. Devon followed close behind, feeling eager to finally see his little brother.

He widened his eyes at the scene that unfolded before him. It was not the dank, dungeon-like place he had imagined, but a brightly lit laboratory with high-tech machinery crowding the room. Several people in lab coat were excitedly looking at a screen.

When they noticed their entry, they all filed in and stood by respectfully. Only one of them, Devon noted, was looking at them coldly instead of smiling.

"How is it progressing?" his father asked.

"Very smoothly, Mr Solaris. It's like a miracle." said one of the scientists excitedly, "I am sure you understand. Filling every bone of his body with molten steel; employing medical techniques to make his skin and muscle ten times more resilient than normal people; even the microchip in his brain utilises the latest technology. This was the most dangerous experiment ever carried out. We didn't even expect our candidate to survive, let alone make such excellent progress."

"Very good." Devon's father replied.

"W-what are you saying?" Devon did not understand, he did not want to understand. He was only praying for his little brother to stay alive. Although he knew that some things could be much worse than death itself, he was unable to believe that his own father could be capable of doing such things to his own son.

The man who had been looking at them coldly suddenly spoke up in a sarcastic tone. "Meaning, the experiment was very successful. Not only did we managed to turn a weak youth into something even stronger than the most elite members of the Delta Force, his body is tougher than stone and there is a microchip implanted in his brain that would make him obey any command you chose to issue. Congratulations, you now have the perfect bodyguard."

Devon staggered. He moved in trance towards to the screen, that the scientists had been crowded around. A voice inside him screamed, I don't want to see this! I don't want to see!

His feet moved on their own and stood before the screen. It did not actually show a clear picture of what was going on inside. The figure inside was moving so fast that Devon could only see a blur.

He was looking into a combat simulator, a very common machine used in this era. There are several types of simulators. The low grade ones are used for entertainment in amusements parks. The highest grade machines are used for training in the army. The one in front of him now was certainty one of the best. It displayed all the possible statistics such as the speed the figure was moving, the strength he was exerting, the combat styles, *etc.*

The figure inside was clearly human; this notion made Devon sigh in relief. From the scientist's report, he had assumed that his little brother had become a robot.

"Release him!" Devon glared at the team coldly, unconsciously emitting the aura he uses to command his vast empire. The crowd immediately went pale. One of them turned to the microphone connected to the

simulator and called out, "Dark Sun, cease the fight, come out immediately."

As the man turned around after issuing the order he found himself under the Devon's terrifying glare. He hurriedly explained, "Mr Solaris, don't worry. Even though we can all give him orders, everything has been prioritised for you and your safety. Your commands overtake ours. If you command him to, he will respond only to your will. Even if the person looks the same as you it won't work because Dark Sun has already memorised your DNA."

Devon shifted his gaze to the screen again. Even though he could not see the face, the figure inside seemed to have the normal silhouette of a slender youth. Devon started to feel a little relieved, there did not seem to be any visible difference. If no one knew about it, no one would notice that his little brother had been modified...

He would ensure that this secret did not leave this room. There would be none left to command Didi!

The exit to the combat simulator opened. Devon was overwhelmed with anxiety and longing as he looked towards his little brother. When his eyes found him, tears threatened to fall. This was his little brother!

There was no way he could mistake him. He even thought that there was not much difference from what he looked like seven years ago. The only changes were that his face was longer, he no longer had his baby cheeks, and he was much taller than before, about 172cm.

Daren used to complain about his height when he was young and

tended to chug down many glasses milk in the hopes to grow taller. Looks like he doesn't need to do that anymore, Devon almost chuckled at the thought.

Didi came and stood before him. Beside Devon who was approximately 187cm tall, his younger brother looked quite short.

Didi emotionlessly walked over to the scientist who had commanded him to come out. His posture was better than any soldier as he stood perfectly straight without moving an inch of his body.

Seeing that his little brother had not reacted, Devon could not help but call out, "Didi, don't you recognise me? I am your older brother."

Dark Sun still displayed no reaction, on the other hand, this comment had shocked the man with the cold look. He could hardly believe it. Devon actually said that Dark Sun was his little brother. Then this means that the person who ordered this experiment was actually the father of the specimen.

"You have to call him 'Dark Sun'," another scientist politely reminded Devon. "That's the call sign we gave him. Of course, you could change it if you wish by giving him the order to do so."

"What are you talking about!?" Devon yelled. He started to panic, the calm he displayed so far rapidly disappearing. He finally realised that the situation was not as simple as he had imagined. This would not be solved simply by killing everyone who knew about the modification done to didi, because his little brother was totally abnormal right now...

"Didi? Didi!" Devon called to the silent and rigid figure over and over but he never got an answer.

The person with the cold look could not bear to watch any longer and issued an order to "Dark Sun". "Turn around and confirm your top priority master."

Dark Sun turned around to look at Devon and responded impassively, "Confirming top priority master. Appearance: matched. Pupils: matched. First stage of confirmation completed without error. Initiating second stage of confirmation, DNA comparison initiated..."

"Didi..." Devon clutched at his chest, feeling his heart constrict in pain and anguish.

"Does Master wish to change the call sign?" Dark Sun asked, seeming a little confused at being called "didi". He showed a confused expression but his eyes were blank like a robot who had judged the situation and showed an appropriate expression.

"Change the call sign?" Devon could not take the blow, he lost all control over his emotions and yelled, "Why on earth would you need to change your name? Your name has never been changed, you are not Dark Sun; you are Daren Solaris, my only brother!"

"Daren Solaris. Name change completed. Also accepting "didi" as a nickname."

Devon's head swam, his heart no longer able to take the pain. His face

was deathly pale. He had never thought that after seven years of endless searching, he would find himself reunited with a robot that only looked like didi. This was even more painful than seeing his corpse.

Suddenly, Devon's father moved. Picked up something sharp from the desk near him and aimed it at Devon. Hearing the gasps from the people around him, Devon looked up. The sharp object in his father's hand never reach him. Because before Devon could even react, his father was stopped by Daren who had moved incredibly fast while monotonously saying. "Attempt to murder top priority master detected. Target set to be eliminated."

As he spoke, Daren's morphed his hands into a spike and pierced through his father's chest without hesitation. Devon was stunned, he could not believe that his father would try to kill him.

"Why?" asked the man with the cold look. "You knew that there was no way you would succeed. Dark Sun won't hesitate to kill anyone who holds a threat towards his top priority master."

Devon froze.

His father chuckled dryly, streams of blood now flowing freely from his mouth. "Haha, I won't let my most precious child kill me. You are the captivating and dazzling sun, the perfect Solaris. I won't let you commit patricide. I won't let my death contaminate your hands. Let all the darkness and sins be carried by Dark Sun, the dark seed of evil who killed his own mother... hahaha..."

Bang!

Devon coldly shot a bullet through his father's head.

The bullet echo left silence in its wake. None of the scientists knew what to do. Devon watched his little brother pull his hand out of the corpse, letting the body fall to the ground. It was clear that his father would have died even if Devon had not pulled the trigger. Devon had failed to protect his little brother. Once again he had made him suffer.

But did cyborg didi care right now? The thought made his heart ache once again.

"Ah! Tears... Dark Sun..." the man with the cold look had felt no sadness for the dead man, he only felt sorry for the two brothers. When he turned to look at Dark Sun, he found something extraordinary...

Hearing him mutter, Devon was shocked. He had forced himself to look away from Daren, but now he turned towards him. His little brother still had no expression but why could he see two streams of tears on his face? Is this another mechanism that makes him shed tears when the situation demands it?

Devon gently stroked didi's face and said tenderly. "You shouldn't be so expressionless. Even with the simplest character design, you should have at least been able to match it with a sad expression."

"You will always be my beloved little brother... not Dark Sun, and I swear that I will protect you."

Without warning, Devon whipped out his hand gun and shot one of the scientists. Before the rest could react, two more fell. Devon turned around and took aim another man. Despite his desperate pleas for mercy, Devon rewarded him with a bullet to the heart.

The accuracy was chilling.

He continued until there was only a single scientist left alive. It was the man with the cold look. Before he could shoot the man calm spoke up. "Please wait. I know that I have no chance of escape. So why don't you listen to me, I have something to say about your little brother's condition."

Devon did not respond but he did not pull the trigger either. The gun remained poised at the man; Devon was afraid the man might suddenly try to attack and his brother would have to kill again.

"Allow me to introduce myself, my name is Theodore Avery, and I am a surgeon. In fact, I am responsible for all the surgeries that have taken place here." Theodore smiled. "Those guys were all on the theoretical side. They only have hypotheses and theories, none of them actually dared to do the actual work. So your father offered me quite a high salary to do it. My skills are of the highest calibre, but the people outside are offended by my work. So I ended up here."

Noticing Devon's impatience, Theodore changed the subject. "Since I accepted the high salary, I prepared myself to operate on something immoral. However, humans always manage to form bonds. Your little brother was a very good child. When he first arrived he used to cry a lot. But once he was told that he could return to his older brother after the experiment ends, he became very obedient. Operations which even

adults couldn't bear, he managed to bear them all."

Theodore turned to look at Dark Sun and added, "Those theorists all thought that it was because he had high endurance. But I believe that it was actually his resolution that made him strong. It's his longing to see you that allowed him to survive."

As he listened to his little brother's past, Devon's expression softened and he was no longer impatient. He was eager to know how didi had lived during the past seven years, even though he aware that it must have been a terrible experience.

"The genetic and biological alterations to his body isn't that bad. He is still alive and gaining strength is no disadvantage either. Also his appearance is no different from a normal human"

"My brother is human!" said Devon, now enraged at the comment.

"Yes, of course. I am sorry." Theodore regretted this mistake and was relieved to see that Dark Sun had not reacted. "The actual problem the microchip in his brain, that what's making him act inhuman."

"And you are the one who put it there. You turned my little brother into a robot with your own two hands." Devon's face darkened, the hand holding the gun now shaking from anger.

"Yes, I did. If I didn't, they would find someone else to perform it instead." Theodore replied smoothly. Devon was at a loss for words.

The scientist sighed again, "If it was going to be done one way or another, then it might as well be me who did it. I was able to use my own theories to persuade those other scientists to make a little modification to the microchip."

"Modification?" Devon asked with curiosity.

"Yes... the actual function of the microchip is quite complex. I will simplify it for you. Just like the human brain there are different sections for each function. There's a certain section for emotions as well. I managed to persuade them to leave the emotion section intact but with a switch. I told them that perhaps you might prefer a bodyguard with feelings."

Devon's face lit up at the news. Theodore smiled and continued, "Those guys agreed but they insisted that the switch be controllable only by the top priority master. So issue the order to your didi now. Tell him to switch off the part that's controlling his emotions. Also, he hasn't forgotten you. He only followed orders that made him incapable of responding to you. Tell him to transfer his memory back from the hard disk and he will be able to remember you."

Devon did what he was told almost immediately. Dark Sun responded with a "Understood". There was a momentary silence before Dark Sun suddenly froze and fell forward. Devon used almost all his strength to turn him around. Dark Sun was not as normal as Theodore implied. His bones had been replaced with steel and the toughness of his muscles were far from ordinary. The small, fragile-looking body of his actually weighed 93 kg.

Seeing didi's reaction, Devon glared at Theodore, who shrugged again,

"Perhaps the change was too major and he needed to restart?"

"Very good!" said Devon as he stood up slowly. In a chilling tone he continued, "Now I have no use for you."

Theodore raised his eyebrows. That Devon wished to erase all witnesses came as no surprise to the man. Calmly he replied, "I must warn you, that switching the emotion function off hasn't been tested yet. If any error occur and I am already dead because you shot me, your little brother won't have anyone to save him."

Devon hesitated, he did not know whether this was the truth. He did not want anyone to know about his little brother's secret nor did he wish to keep anyone who could command him alive.

"You should remember that your didi was made to protect you. Even if you order him not to protect you, he would still fight on your behalf. If there is any injury, no normal doctor can tend him." Theodore continued coldly. "Your little brother's muscle cannot be pierced even by the sharpest surgery knives. His body temperature and the frequency of his heartbeat do not match a normal human's. Not only will it be futile to go to normal doctors, but it will also reveal your brother's abnormality. Therefore, it is in your brother's interest to let me live."

Devon lowered his gun and looked at Theodore threateningly. "I won't kill you, but know this. If my brother's secret is leaked, your life will be forfeit. Don't even think about running away; with my power over the Solaris Federation, I can find you even if you hide away in the remotest of deserts."

Facing the man who has dominated most of the whole world's economy and had been a key player in the financial world since he was a teenager, even the nonchalant Theodore could not help but put on a serious face. "I understand, I won't tell anyone."

Devon walked back to didi and somehow managed to lift him up after exerting all the strength he could muster. Theodore wanted to help but gave up after receiving a fierce glare from Devon.

Devon walked with much difficulty, but he did not let go despite the enormous weight on his back and the long flight of stairs. No matter what happened, he would not let go.

I will protect you this time.

\*\*\*\*\*CHAPTER 1  
END\*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

- 1Devon: his Chinese name is 日向炎, pronounced Ri Xiang Yan
- 2Daren: his Chinese name is 日向夜, pronounced Ri Xiang Ye. Dar is equivalent to 阿夜/ Ah Ye
- 3Didi: equivalent of younger brother
- 4Gege: equivalent of older brother

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 2

"Gege, don't go! Can't you stay and play with Dar for a little while? Just a little bit longer?" This was when little Daren was only three years old. At that time, Devon had already taken to calling his little brother by the nickname "Dar".

"I can't, Dar, I have to go to class now. Or else the horrible economics teacher will get angry and something terrible will happen to gege." At this, Devon stuck his tongue out and made a face at the little boy. Maybe this will keep didi from picking economics when he grows up.

Upon hearing his gege's refusal to stay, Dar lowered his head and pouted. He looked so innocent and pitiful.

Devon was instantly defeated. "Fine, ten more minutes..."

Dar looked up happily and ran to the toy chest. He took out the rubber ball gege had given him and shouted with joy, "Let's play ball!"

"Again? My face still hasn't recovered from last time. Evil Dar! You must be planning to ruin my beauty!" Devon made a face while Dar continued laughing and threw the rubber ball...

"Ah! My face! Stupid Dar..."

"Heehee!"

The two brothers continued playing happily until the door, which no one usually approached, opened. A man stood by the door. It was the man whom Dar feared the most. Behind him was the angry economics tutor.

Devon, on the other hand, was not afraid even after seeing his father's icy glare. He stuck his tongue out and made a face as usual. His father always spoiled him, so he knew he wasn't going to be reprimanded.

"Ah, I forgot to go to the lesson," said Devon, still in high spirits, as he patted didi's head fondly and headed out of the room.

The last person to leave was his father. The man glared at Dar, who cowered in fear. When the man left the room he switched off the lights. Dar did not react, since he was quite used to this gesture. He crawled back into his tiny bed and buried himself under the sheets.

"So dark... Dar is scared." The little boy curled up as tightly as he could and hid under sheets with his face only barely exposed. He started recalling all the scary things his nanny had told him.

The three-year-old did not understand much about ghosts and spirits. The nanny had wanted to scare the child, so she described these things as terrifyingly as possible. This made Dar hate the dark. Whoever visited his room, whether they meant to scare him or not, always switched off the lights when they left and with Dar's height, there was no way he could reach the light switch.

And so, gege's arrival felt like the arrival of light. Devon would always turn on the lights and then Dar would eagerly jump off the bed. He would

see gege's smile and hear him laugh.

"Dar, come and play with me."

How long did these moments of happiness last? Dar had no knowledge of time. Even though gege had taught him how many months there are in a year, how many days there are in a week, for a child who had lived in a dark tower for as long as he could remember, the concept of time did not mean much.

In fact, to the boy, the passing of a day meant gege coming to play with him or teach him things. Dar liked everything as long as gege came to visit. It did not matter whether it was to play or to tutor him; everything was fine as long as Dar got to see gege.

He recalled receiving four gifts from gege when he turned three: wooden models, a toy car, a box of colour pencils, and a full collection of fairy tales. Dar still had not finished reading them. He was only halfway through reading Rapunzel and he wondered whether the girl with the long braids ever managed to escape the tower.

As he grew older, Daren was finally able to reach the light switch and no longer needed to live in the dark. But who was to know that true darkness was just about to arrive...

"Where are you taking me?" Even though this was his father, Dar looked fearfully at the man who had grabbed his hand without any intention of letting go.

"To the place you truly belong." replied his Father without even bothering to look at Daren.

"What about gege? Will he come?" Dar said in a small voice.

His father never answered him.



Hurts... It hurts so much!

Dar cried out in pain. He was bound to a metal chair surrounded by many complex machinery. Several wires trailing from these machines were attached to him.

The people in the white lab coats around him seemed to ignore his cries as they discussed among themselves. "How stable is the body?" "He is too young of age... can he survive the operations?" "What type of steel should we use?" "We must seek a compromise between strength and flexibility."

"Gege... gege... Dar hurts, gege..."

A large hand stroked his forehead, it was so gentle... just like gege.

"Hello there. Are you Dar?"

A pair of dark green eyes appeared in front of him. Through his blurry and swollen eyes Dar also noticed the beautiful azure hair. It was the same colour as the sky that Daren had seen from the tiny window of the tower.

"My name is Theodore Avery<sup>1</sup>; I am your doctor." The man was wearing the same clothes as the rest of the people in the room. The only difference was that he smiled.

Just like gege, Dar thought. Actually, Devon and Dr. Avery were very different; the only thing they had in common was that they both smiled at Daren.

"Does Dar have a gege?" Theodore asked, forcing himself to speak gently.

Dar nodded.

"Does Dar like gege?"

"Yes, Dar likes gege the best!" He nodded again with certainty.

"Then be a good boy. Dar is sick right now and can't go see gege. If you are brave and let your illness be treated, you can go and see gege." Theodore smiled.

"Really?" Dar sniffed, his face once more filled with hope.

Theodore forced himself from turning away as he shakily answered, "Yes... it's true..."

"Okay, Dar will be a good boy. Dar won't cry anymore." He forced himself to stop crying and his tears no longer fell.

"Such a good kid..." Theodore could not take it any longer and turned his face away. His heart beat fast and the hand that held his cigarette shook in a way that a surgeon's never should.



"I would never have guessed that I, the immoral doctor who only treats people for money... would be the nicest person in here." Theodore laughed cynically to himself. If this got out to the family members of those patients he had left to die, none of them would believe it.

Theodore took a long drag from the cigarette and swore, "What the hell is this place? That's only a seven-year-old!"



ARRRGHHHHHHH!

Dar forced himself from screaming in pain and did his best to stay silent. After the operation, every single cell in his body cried out in pain. He was only given a short time to recover before came the next dose of pain. Even adults could not bear the amount of pain that was being inflicted on a child who had not even turned ten...

Daren fell so many times, and all he could do was stand up just to fall back down again. Daren did not need the others to force him to get up. He himself forced his body to carry on. Soon his limbs no longer felt familiar; his every movement required much strength and resolution. There were a few times when he felt as if he was on the verge of giving up...

I have to heal faster so I can see gege! Daren would fill his mind with thoughts of gege. In fact, had nothing left in his memories except gege's smile.

But that image itself was enough give him the strength he needed to stand up once more.



"Dr. Theodore, how many more operations will there be before Dar can heal completely and go see gege?"

How long has it been since the last time he saw gege?

Dar's awareness of time was even foggier than before. Before, he could measure the days through gege's daily visits and the years through the gifts gege gave him for his birthday. But right now, he did not even know how old he was.

Theodore's hand shook as he forced himself to smile. "It's the last time, truly."

"Really?" Dar's voice was filled with excitement. He never spoke much. It was a habit he developed over the years. He did not speak unless the people in the white lab coats questioned him about the experiments. No one really spoke to him except Theodore.

This is really his last operation, Theodore took another drag of the cigarette. The last operation involved implanting the microchip in his brain. After this operation, Daren would no longer be human; the only thing left would be a mindless robot. Dar will disappear forever, and only Dark Sun will remain.

"Dr. Avery?" Dar turned to face the surgeon.

"Hmm?" Theodore was a little distracted. What the child says doesn't matter; after all, he is going to disappear after a few more minutes. It is no longer necessary to comfort the boy, he no longer needs...

"Thank you, Doctor," Dar said while giving him a strange look. The boy did not understand why Theodore stopped smiling. But he was not going to start hating him just because of that. After all, if Theodore had not been there in the past few months to comfort and talk to him, Dar would likely have gone crazy. Thinking of this, Dar said, "Doctor, when Dar is healthy again and goes back to gege, you must come and visit Dar! I'm sure you'll like gege!"

Tears suddenly welled up in the pair of dark green eyes and Theodore was forced to turn away.

"Doctor, are you crying?" Dar was taken aback by the sudden tears.

"You idiot! It's only dust. I got dust in my eyes. It hurts! Damn it! The operation is cancelled!" Theodore left quickly; his hand never left his eyes.

As Theodore walked away, his mind echoed with the thoughts, Damn, I have a sudden idea. Now I have to find those theorists and talk some sense into them. How troublesome...



Top priority master confirmed.

Didi... I am your older brother!

You are not Dark Sun, you are Daren Solaris, my only brother!

Attempt to murder top priority master detected. Target set to be eliminated.

This dark seed of evil who killed his own mother.

Tears flowing out. System Check: Error. Scanning Tears Section... Facial Expression Section...

You will always be my beloved little brother... and I swear that I will protect you.

Accepting Command. Activating Emotion Section. Transferring Memories...System Overheating... Danger... System Shutting Down...

Gege, you finally came.

Open eyes, assess surrounding environment. Normal bedroom, Size 10m2. Currently resting on foreign bed. Presence of living being next to bed.

Confirming living being. Blond hair. Red eyes. Appearance matches the top priority master. Top priority master... that's... gege!

Gege... no, it's master. But master is gege. What about me? Who am I? Dark Sun, no! It's Daren, Dar... Daren's hand moved to his head and squeezed hard. His mind was a mess. Somehow Daren ended up winning the struggle and no longer cared about the throbbing pain in his head. As he extended his hand, he found it shaking. What was happening? Was it the muscle or the steel bones that was reacting in such an odd way?

Daren did not bother to think about his hand anymore. Instead, he slowly extended it towards gege who was sleeping right next to his bed. When Daren's shaky hand made contact he once again felt gege's familiar hair.

"Gege--" Daren said softly despite the warnings in his brain telling him not to wake up the top priority master or refer to him that way.

The figure next to the bed shifted slightly and complained in a sleepy

voice. "Okay, okay... Dar, be nice. Let me sleep for a little longer... I will play with you later."

Daren immediately became silent. The top priority master had issued an order. He wants to sleep and Daren is not to wake him. He became still and did not even move the hand that was poised above Devon's head. He only gazed at gege's sleeping figure. That was enough for him.

When Daren did not complain or make any noise, the figure next to the bed looked up in shock. A pair of ruby red eyes were looking at him. Seeing that the boy had already woken up, Devon became momentarily speechless.

"Ah... Dar..." Devon finally said with much difficulty. He was both apprehensive but excited at the same time. If any enemies saw the Solaris Emperor right now, they would not believe him to be the same person. After all, the Solaris Emperor is as brilliant as the sun, dominating the world while smiling his confident smile.

Daren was having an internal struggle. He was unsure about what to call Devon. Should it be master or gege? At the same time he did not know whether he was Dark Sun or Dar...

"Dar, what's wrong? Are you okay?" Devon asked anxiously. Actually, the question he really wanted to ask was: Have you recovered yet? Was it the robot Dark Sun or his beloved little brother that he was talking to right now?

"Nothing is wrong, master..." Daren frowned.

After hearing the word "master", Devon's eyes widened in grief. That word cut through him like a knife to the heart. He felt numb with the pain coursing through his body. Has he lost Daren forever? Devon clenched his fists at that thought. Anger overwhelmed him and he needed an outlet. He suddenly stood up intending to finish the job he had started, Theodore...

He won't like his fate. Devon's expression was cold and hateful.

"... ge, Master gege."

Devon stopped, his previous expression disappeared in the blink of an eye. It was immediately replaced by a look of concern for his little brother. He spun around and landed back on his spot next to the bed. His eyes sparkled with happiness as he looked up at Daren.

"What did you just call me? Say it again," said Devon eagerly.

"Master gege." Daren had finally figured out what to call him. Since he's both my master and gege, then I'll just call him that... even though it sounds awfully strange.

Gege! Dar finally called me gege! thought Devon with a foolish grin on his face. He impulsively muted the "master" part and pretended not to hear it.

"Dar, can you call me again?"

"Master gege."

"Once more."

"Master gege."

"Again..."

This was the scene that greeted Theodore Avery when he made his way into the room. The legendary tycoon with an idiotic smile on his face, lapsing into a fantasy upon hearing the word "gege" and when he comes to his senses, he gets his little brother to call him gege again and begins his daydream anew...

This is the... Solaris Emperor?

Theodore's balked at the scene in front of him. If he wasn't afraid of the crowd of the bodyguards outside the room, he really would chuck the vase beside him and yell, "Shut up! Stop getting him to call you gege, you brother fanatic!"

Unfortunately, this brother fanatic was the most prominent figure in the world and Theodore was only an insignificant doctor. Theodore's temple twitched as he cleared his throat to get the fanatic's attention.

However, the first to notice him was Daren, who looked up and said, "Dr. Avery."

Theodore slowly walked over to the bed and proceeded to jot down

notes as he casually asked, "Report the condition of your body and the microchip."

"Understood." Daren assumed his emotionless face as he continued. "No changes have been made to the body. Nothing out of the ordinary has happened to the microchip either."

Theodore nodded and continued to write on his record book. "During the process of switching on the emotion section and retrieving your past memories, did anything unusual occur?"

"No errors during memory recovery. After switching on the emotion section, however, there has been a few conflicts with the orders that was previously issued."

Daren stopped speaking and stared intensely at a spot behind Theodore's back. Dr. Avery had not noticed and kept on writing. Not knowing how to describe this latest information, he looked up again. "What kind of conflict, Dark Sun? Please explain or give an example."

Daren blinked. "For example, currently, Master gege is emitting a murderous aura behind Dr. Theodore. Previous orders specify that Dark Sun must obey Master gege and ask him whether he wishes for your death. But after the activation of the Emotion Section, Dar really wishes to warn Dr. Theodore to look behind him..."

Theodore suddenly stopped writing, he finally felt the killing intent coming from behind. A cold sweat ran down his forehead.

"What do you think you are doing?" asked Devon with a smile.

"Checking Dark Sun's condition." Theodore carefully replied as he stiffly raised both hands in the air. He could already picture the cute but deadly BHP 9mm, which killed the whole research team, pointed at his back.

"What did you just call my little brother?"

"Oh..." Theodore finally realised his mistake. "Oh... Um... Dar!"

Devon snorted, clearly not pleased.

"Master gege, do you wish for me to kill him?"

Daren pushed aside the bed sheets as the nails on his right hand suddenly extended and glinted ominously. This deadly hand was positioned right above Theodore's neck, who, at that point did not even dare to gulp. After all, he had been Dark Sun's main surgeon. No one knew better than him how deadly Dark Sun was. If Devon only said "yes" or "kill", Theodore was certain that he would go straight to hell.

"But Dar doesn't want to kill Dr. Theodore; there is another conflict between the previous orders and the Emotion Section," Daren said with some distress. His expression softened as he looked at Theodore.

"Don't kill him, Dar!" Devon said anxiously. He was now afraid that he might accidentally order didi to do something that would make Daren sad.

Upon hearing this Daren retracted his nails and returned his right hand to its original position. He no longer displayed any intention to kill.

Theodore sighed in relief. He would rather have Devon shoot him than Dark Sun kill him with his nails. The first option at least gave him the chance of recovery; the second option would simply leave him dead on the spot.

"Didi!" Devon couldn't be bothered with Theodore anymore and dived at his little brother. He picked up his hand and turned it so he could study it at different angles. It looked exactly like a normal human hand from every angle. So how did it manage to produce such long and deadly nails?

"Don't extend your nails in the future, okay?" said Devon, going into his nagging mother mode. "What if someone found out that you are different from a normal human? No, if anyone finds out, I will shoot him myself!"

Daren nodded. He copied the command - Don't extend your nails - into his microchip.

"....." Theodore remained silent, he did not know how to tell Devon that those nails were actually the most human part of his little brother...

Never mind that, unless he had a death wish, he was better off staying put. Theodore wisely chose not to agitate the man holding the small-but-deadly hand gun again. "Looks like Dark... I mean Dar's condition is quite good. Even though there are some conflicts, Mr. Solaris can solve the

problem by commanding him to prioritise his emotions."

Devon immediately repeated this order and also added, "Call me gege from now on and get rid of the master part."

"Yes, gege." Daren nodded and obeyed the order.

Gege... Devon returned to his "Gege and Didi" fantasy world with the foolish grin on his face, leaving an exasperated Theodore beside them. Dr. Avery pushed up his glasses and sighed. He was being ignored once again.

"Mr. Solaris, what are your future plans for Dark-"

Devon glared at him with his intense red eyes. Theodore ignored the cold sweat running down his forehead and his heart quickening in fear. He continued nonchalantly. "What are your future plans for Dar? I am his surgeon and know quite a lot about him. If you tell me, I can make certain estimations for him."

Devon found Theodore's courage interesting. His fearsome glare and his aura were the result of many treacherous battles in the financial world; they were not something normal people could handle. It was not unusual for people to even wet themselves in fear when they confronted him.

"I want didi to go to school. He's already fifteen and yet he's never been to school. That's just not right."

Devon had already made up his mind. He wanted didi to have a normal life, and a normal fifteen year old should go to school.

Theodore's lips twitched as he carefully said, "But you do realise that Dar's microchip contains large amounts of information already. He doesn't need to go to school."

"Does that include social interactions? Does that include the experiences of a normal teenager?" Devon raised his voice without realising. He was angry, at least not at Theodore, but at his father. He hated him for not even allowing didi to have a normal school life.

Theodore stayed silent. Due to the demands of their previous employer, Dark Sun was designed to be the perfect bodyguard with superhuman abilities. That was exactly the opposite of what Devon wanted.

"I want Dar to experience the life of a normal teenager, Dr. Theodore. If you help me with this and succeed in turning Dar back into a normal teenager, I will grant any wish you may have."

Devon had a confident smile on his face, he was well aware of how much he possessed. If he could use 30% of the world's human resources to find didi, he could just as easily use them to investigate an insignificant doctor who lost his certificate. Meaning that he already knew Theodore's soft spot. This man was simply a mad scientist and thus needed money. Quite a lot of money, in fact, to complete all his experiments.

Theodore's eyes gleamed as he answered without hesitation, "A perfect standard science lab with unlimited supply, money and resources."

"That's easy, I will give it to you now," Devon answered readily. "But if I find that you don't have the ability to help my little brother, then I will limit or even stop the flow of money, do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand." Theodore's lips twitched as he accepted the offer.

"Then..." Devon turned to didi and instantly assumed his "good brother with a gentle smile" image. "Dar, what type of school would you like to go? Gege will organise everything for you."

Daren opened his mouth but did not know what to say. After thinking for a while, he delved into his microchip and retrieved information on every possible school. He looked up and judged the school that would help him best with his job as a bodyguard.

After a few minutes he spoke to Devon. "YeLan Academy, in the combat section."

Devon's smile faltered; he felt a little troubled. Didi was already a cyborg; if he went to the combat section, there would be a high chance that he might be discovered... meaning Devon should do something about this.

But, he really did not want to deny didi's request. The last time he did, the boy had to suffer pain and agony for seven whole years. Devon made up his mind; no matter what didi requested, he would never refuse it.

"Alright!" Devon answered with conviction. This alarmed Theodore.

"You can't! Dar is really strong! Really, insanely strong. You don't understand how strong he is... if you let him attend a school like this, he'll easily be discovered. Didn't you want him to have the normal life of a teenager..."

Theodore paused, letting his words trail off. It looked as if he suddenly realised something or had become absentminded halfway through the sentence.

"What is it?" Devon scowled angrily. No one had ever dared to stop him and be absentminded while speaking to him.

Theodore had a strange expression on his face as he hesitantly said, "The normal teenager experience you were talking about... it's not possible. You are the Solaris Emperor, the most prominent person on earth. Your brother... there's no way he could have a normal life. If you think about it, the cyborg part of him is nowhere as catchy as the brother of the Solaris Emperor."

Devon blinked. He had completely overlooked that. He suddenly sat down and buried his face in his hands. If didi could not have a normal life because of him, that would be so cruel.

"Keep it secret then..."

"Huh?" Theodore did not hear it clearly.

Devon looked up and his eyes shone with certainty. "I said, we will keep

that a secret then. No one will know that he's my brother except you and me." repeated Devon with a threatening look.

How many times have I been threatened? Theodore wondered as he smiled helplessly. "I won't say a word, don't worry about that. I have no intention of playing around with my own life. Besides his relation to you isn't the only problem here. I know how strong he is; that's something you don't even understand yet. You have no idea about the kind of weapon you have at your disposal."

Devon frowned, he did not like how Theodore described his little brother. But he could tell from Theodore's expression that the man was not exaggerating. Devon would never use didi as a weapon. He was also certain that with the power he held, he would not need didi to do any killing for him.

"Dar..." Devon spoke slowly, Daren turned to his gege, waiting for him to speak. "Gege will give you another name and you can't tell anyone else that you are my brother, is that alright?"

Daren nodded. He would not refuse any request from gege anyway, be it due to the microchip in his brain. or his own emotions. He would never disobey his brother. Even though they did not look alike, their personalities were very similar.

"Okay then, there's a lot to do. For example, I need to get a headquarters that will connect my house to my brother's house with a hidden passageway so that I can go between the two houses without been discovered. Mmm... should I buy that YeLan Academy under some random name?" Devon stroked his chin in thought.

Are you crazy? Do you really need to go that far? Theodore's mouth twitched again. Are all rich people like this?

"Oh, yeah! I need to get clothes for didi. I'll just hire a fashion designer then," said Devon as he continued to voice his thoughts.

Hire a fashion designer... Theodore was stupefied.

"Mmm... does he need tutoring? Maybe I should hire a tutor for him." Devon frowned, looking just like a parent worrying about his child's education.

No need! Theodore reigned in the urge to point a finger at him and shout - No need for tutoring in the combat section, your didi's combat skills are better than the actual teachers.

Devon picked up his cell phone and dialled some numbers before speaking. "Secretary? I want a fashion designer who specialises in designing clothes for the upper-class. And I want a new headquarters and a house located somewhat far from my current location... Yes, yes... I want a normal house... Also, get the Covert Base Construction Engineers to dig a tunnel that connects the two infrastructures... Oh and find out if the YeLan Academy is up for sale... and buy a school student's certificate..."

"Hey! Dar! Get your brother to stop wasting money!" Theodore called out to Daren, unable to take it anymore.

"I can't order gege," said Daren as he shook his head and also added, "Gege, can I get a room for training? I would like a lot of weapons in it."

Devon paused on the phone and then continued, "Hey! Wait! Also construct a perfectly soundproof basement under that normal house. Yes, it needs to be very big. And start a weapons specialist team, they must be capable of coming up with new weaponry immediately and produce them quickly enough to send it to me... I want all types of weapons."

"You two are brothers..." Theodore buried his face in his hands, finally giving up on trying to reason with them.

\*\*\*\*\*CHAPTER 2 END\*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

1Theodore Avery: his chinese name is 安特契, pronounced Anteqi

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 3

"In that case didi, you have to remember, you must absolutely not reveal your strength in front of your schoolmates."

Devon Solaris adjusted didi's tie, stepped back and took a good look at him. The boy was wearing a navy blue high school uniform, carrying a proper school bag and, in addition to a pair of large spectacles, his hair was styled neatly by Devon. Daren Solaris looked just like an ordinary high school student.

"..."

A very nerdy high school student. Theodore Avery very wisely decided not to comment from the back as he continued drinking his coffee. He felt that Devon's concept of a high school student stagnated in the previous century.

Devon nodded with satisfaction and reminded once more, "Remember not to let your schoolmates discover your strength..." after some consideration, he worriedly added, "But if there is any danger, you still have to protect yourself, understand?"

Daren obediently nodded in affirmation.

It was the 28th reminder of the day. Theodore silently added another stroke of ketchup on his breakfast dish. So far his plate had five sets of completed chicken scratches and the sixth was two ketchup strokes short to completion.

"Also, your current identity is Theodore Avery's son, Daren Avery. Can you remember that?"

"Yes, I remember." Daren nodded, in fact, he had been nodding the whole morning.

"You'll be late if you don't leave now," Theodore blandly reminded, emptying his cup of coffee in one gulp. If he had to listen to more of this, he would have a break down.

"In that case, Dar, follow the doctor, he will take you to school."

At this point, Devon became dejected; he really wanted to walk didi to school hand in hand. Alas, if he were to do so, Daren's identity would instantly be exposed and henceforth he would be unable to live the life of an ordinary high school student..

Theodore simply unfolded his newspaper with a frown upon hearing Devon, and casually replied, "He can go by himself."

"No! What if he loses his way?" Devon protested loudly.

"He's got GPS implanted in his brain."

"What if he gets mugged by delinquents en route?"

"Half his finger nail is enough to throw a dozen delinquents."

"What if he gets kidnapped by a weird uncle?"

"Don't worry, you, as his master, have ordered him to go to school. Even if it was the end of the world, he would get there in time."

Theodore remained buried in his newspaper, not showing the slightest inclination of getting up to taking Daren to school. Meanwhile, Devon clenched his jaw and his face took on a dark and ominous hue.

BANG!

A hole appeared in the newspaper

Theodore jumped.

Devon narrowed his blood red eyes, his BHP 9mm glinting beautifully in his hands.

"Sigh! Why does an unmarried man like me need to bring a kid to school?" Theodore grumbled as he held Daren's hand, stalking briskly forward as if propelled by a jet of flaming anger.

"If someone were to see this, how am I ever going to get a girlfriend?!"

Theodore sighed again. Originally, he was an eligible bachelor, but who would have known that, in order to hide Dar's identity, Devon would forcefully register Dar as his son! Bastard! He had initially protested

vigorously to have Daren registered as his younger brother, but a resounding crack from the BHP 9mm dispelled any lingering complaints.

Theodore unconsciously quickened his steps, afraid to be seen by a passing beauty and then lose the chance at a wholesome relationship. Suddenly, the object he was dragging along stopped in its tracks. Unfortunately, this object had the strength to tow a truck, and under the threat of the BHP 9mm, Theodore was forbidden to release this object's hand until they arrived at school. Therefore, with one stalking forward while the other stood stock still, Theodore's momentum caused his feet to slip, and the ground promptly met his head.

"D... Dar, what's the matter?" Theodore asked from below, his face now pale.

Daren seemed not to have heard Theodore. He tilted his head, looking at the blue sky, the streets, the trees... he couldn't stop looking. Various emotions flashed through his eyes... curiosity, excitement, happiness... like a kid on his very first excursion.

So that's how it is, a caged bird seeing the blue sky for the first time. Theodore sat up, silently observing for awhile before saying, "Dar.. if we don't get move on, you'll be late for school."

"Yes doctor."

Daren gripped the doctor's hand firmly and poised himself to run. This action gave the still semi-reclined Theodore a feeling of great unease. He stammered, "W-wait a second, what are you doing... AAaaarrrgggghhhhhh!!!!"

A human tow truck was towing a wailing doctor, leaving a cloud of dust in their trail. This magnificent trail of dust meandered all the way to a spot near YeLan Academy before screeching to a halt with emergency brakes.

Once the human tow truck halted, Theodore hastily flung Daren's arm away and sat himself on the ground panting. After panting for some time, the echo of the school bell roused him. He lifted his head to find Daren still standing at the same spot. He hurriedly reminded, "Dar, go quickly, the bell has rung."

Daren nodded, raised his leg to go... hesitating for a second, he turned around to ask with some apprehension, "Doctor, when emotions and orders clash, I should follow my feelings right?"

Theodore nodded imperatively.

"Gege ordered me to go to school, but... I just want to go home and spend time with gege, can I go home?"

Theodore was momentarily dumbfounded. He stood up, and patted Daren on the head saying, "Your brother didn't order you, Dar, he has your best interests in mind; that's why he hopes you will go to school, hopes you will be like an ordinary youth, hopes you will be happy. Dar, if you requested not to attend school, to stay by his side, I believe he will not turn you down, but Dar, he will be very worried about you."

"So Dar, for the sake of your brother and for yourself, why don't you give school a try?" Theodore gently asked.

Daren nodded, Theodore rewarded him with another pat on the head before turning to leave, "Your brother placed a mobile phone in your bag, call home when school's over, I will come pick you up. If you want to hang out with your friends, give your brother a call to inform him, he will be very pleased that you made new friends."

Daren nodded once again, watching Theodore's departing figure until he rounded a corner and went out of sight.

Daren was a little afraid; he did not like watching someone he trusts leave. It made him recall the scene of being separated from gege. However, he also did not want gege to worry. Quelling his discomfort, Daren tightly grabbed his school bag to his side and walked towards the school...



"Alright, alright, everyone quiet down. I have an important news for everyone."

A shinai flew across the room.

"Stop playing! the bell rang ages ago."

A broom flew across the room.

"Today, our class will have a new student..."

The teacher stopped mid sentence and hid under the lectern, the very next second, two sturdy wooden tables collided in the air, sending table legs and splinters everywhere. Everyone hurriedly hid and dodged.

The teacher emerged from beneath the lectern and wiped the sweat on his brow before continuing, "This is our new transfer student, Daren Avery. Everyone please welcome him."

The teacher clapped his hands while dodging rolls of toilet paper, pencil boxes, books and other projectiles.

Daren Solaris slowly walked in, feeling a little astonished. School was very different from what he had envisioned.

"Daren Avery, why don't you introduce yourself to everyone." the teacher crouched low, dodging a lunch box while speaking to Daren.

"Uh... hello everyone, my name is Daren Avery." Daren blinked as he witnessed the airspace of the classroom filled with flying projectiles, feeling even more shocked.

A piercing feminine laughter derisively remarked, "What the hell! So nerdy! Where did this nerd come from? Hahaha."

"...erm, I just transferred schools today, I hope I can get along well with everyone." he lowered his head, as for whether they could get along or not... he already knew how well that would pan out.

The teacher looked around the classroom with a troubled expression, mumbling under his breath, "What to do? There are no more seats."

Daren looked at the teacher in confusion, and then back at the furthest row of tables where a student was sleeping flopped over on the table. His surroundings were clearly unoccupied, yet the teacher said that there were no more seats. Daren, not reading between the lines, simply pointed to the seat next to the sleeping student saying, "Teacher, there's a seat there. Can I sit there?"

Silence. For a second the whole classroom was devoid of sound, even the person about to hurl another desk remained stock still with the desk held high, his line of vision following Daren's pointed finger.

Everyone was staring at the seat Daren pointed to. The seat to the right of the sleeping student, among a group of unoccupied table and chairs, standing empty as if they were the executioner's electric chairs. A fair few gulped nervously.

"Student Avery, that, that seat... is not ideal..." the teacher's sleeve was no longer sufficient. He took out a handkerchief to wipe his sweat, his expression clearly unwilling to allow Daren to occupy that seat, and yet there was no other place for the boy to sit. He was stuck between a rock and a hard place and revealed an anxious expression.

"It's okay, any seat is fine."

Daren considerately replied, not wanting the teacher to be troubled. But he had obviously misunderstood the situation because those words turned the teacher's face pale, while frightened expressions emerged

from the crowd of students.

Daren felt increasingly strange. He could not find the answer to what he should do even with the help of his microchip, and even the teacher, standing on the lectern, was withholding the answer. Being stared at was so uncomfortable. Daren unconsciously lowered his head, slowly inching forward towards the seat he had pointed at earlier.

With every step he took, a student would suck in a breath. The closer he got to the seat, the more uneasy everyone became.

"Hey! Quick! Advise him not to commit suicide!"

His classmates whispered among themselves, but all of their conversations were picked up by Daren's super hearing system.

"He's so pitiful, he just transferred here and now he's going to die..."

Daren was puzzled. He was going to die? After listening to this, Daren's imperative for self protection became activated. He rapidly analyzed his surroundings, trying to identify the possible source of his demise. However, whichever way he analyzed it, Daren was unable to detect any threat to his life.

So he continued walking, all the way to the seat and pulled out the chair.

Scores of people in the classroom held their collective breaths.

Daren looked around, gingerly lowering the bag from his shoulder.

Girls started screaming, boys gaping.

Daren sat down impassively.

"Oh my god! Manslaughter! There's gonna be manslaughter!"

The crowd fled screaming, throwing objects, creating a scene of utter chaos... though it had initially been chaotic enough already.

The crowd paused for a moment. Daren too, was momentarily dumbfounded. In the end... nothing happened. Only the school bell rang, signalling the end of class. The crowd dashed from the classroom as if escaping from a disaster, eyeing it from a distance. A few of the braver ones dared to walk closer to the window to peep inside.

Daren remained seated unaware. Looking at his watch, he realised it was noon. Gege once instructed him to eat well, so he stood up in search of the canteen to eat a good meal.

Daren glanced to his side and realised that the sleeping student was still flopped over unmoving. He recalled that Gege had also told him to get along well with his classmates; best to make a few friends...

"Classmate, hey classmate, it's noon already, do you want to eat with me?"

Daren gently pushed the sleeping student's shoulder, not noticing that this move of his made tens of people outside drop their jaws.

"Who is it?!"

A loud boom destroyed the table, a roar shook the dust from the ceiling as the sleeping student gradually raised his head. Eye-catching orange hair, spiked like a porcupine; a fierce gaze unsoftened by the blue of his eyes; bronze skin with the tattoo of a dragon, with its fangs and claws bared, stretched from the forehead to the jaw. The boy's image was one that brought fear upon those who looked upon him.

In fact, his classmates outside the window had all said a prayer. Though they didn't have a good impression of this nerd, he had still been a classmate for 10 minutes; it was only proper to pray for his early reincarnation.

"It's me. It's time for lunch; are you going to eat?" Daren blinked and continued asking, seemingly unaware of how different this person standing before him was from his other classmates.

"Duh!" the porcupine head bellowed once again. Once he was done, he cast his eyes on Daren, eyeing him up and down and realized that he didn't know him. Porcupine head impatiently asked, "Who are you?"

Finally, a classmate is speaking to me! With happiness in his heart, Daren answered with a smile, "I am the new transfer student, my name is Daren Avery, nice to meet you."

Porcupine head was at first dumbfounded, evidently taken aback by Daren's behaviour. He then raised an eyebrow and sneered, "What are you doing? Trying to find a mountain to lean on since you're new? Get lost, don't bother me!"

Daren revealed a puzzled expression. "I'm sorry, I don't understand. What does 'mountain to lean on' mean?"

"Finding a mountain to lean on is to find someone to depend on... Fuck! Why am I explaining this to you?!"

Porcupine head jumped off his chair and kicked the table by the side, which subsequently crashed into the ceiling and shattered into tiny pieces

Force of 300 Newtons, using this attack as a point of reference, he has the ability to generate an estimated maximum of 1500 Newtons, belonging to the class possessing a high explosive power. Daren rapidly analyzed porcupine head's capabilities.

Porcupine head saw him staring at the splinters, thinking that Daren must have been scared witless. He would not even get pleasure from bullying this kind of a country bumpkin. He shoved his hands into his pockets and sauntered out of the classroom.

"Wait, wait a second, you haven't told me your name." Daren was a little surprised, usually after introducing oneself, shouldn't the other party reciprocate? This was the information he received from his microchip regarding human interactions.

Porcupine head paused in his stride, looking at Daren from the corner of his eyes and said coldly, "Ezart1. Remember it well! Don't mess with this name!"

Daren nodded with what seemed to be understanding. As Ezart turned to walk away...

"So are you actually willing to eat with me?" Daren asked with puzzlement.

The floor slipped beneath Ezart's feet, he almost did a dog-eat-shit tumble in front of an audience. Barely regaining his balance in time, he turned back to glare at Daren, suspecting that the latter was infuriating him on purpose. Yet Daren was a face of unawareness, which, coupled with his nerdy outfit, was undeniably transmitting the signal that said --- "I am nerdy, what can you do about it?"

Nerd! It was the only word reverberating within Ezart's mind, there was no way he could use his fists against such a nerdy person, he could only scowl as he bellowed, "Are you stupid? I am not willing! No! Do you understand? If you do then get lost, if you say one more word I'll beat you so that you'll be hospitalised till the end of term!"

Daren was startled, he nodded somewhat dejectedly, "I understand."

Ezart snorted loudly as he departed the classroom, leaving Daren alone. Dar lowered his head and stood still for a while before remembering his brother's instruction to eat well. Looking at his watch, lunch break was almost half over, therefore, he hurriedly fished out his

wallet and rushed towards the cafeteria.



Due to gege's instruction to have a full meal, Daren's frightening stomach capacity, and the massive energy requirements for supporting his 90kg frame, he ended up with 2 mountainous plates of food, one filled with meat and rice and the other with vegetables.

(Gege's reminder: Have a balanced diet.)

With his food in hand, Daren looked around in search of a seat, but the cafeteria was fully occupied, he therefore had to stand impassively in a spot, waiting for someone to vacate a seat. However, everyone had eaten their fill and were leisurely watching the foolish sight of "someone" holding two large mountains of food. No one was leaving.

Daren had no choice but to walk towards the eye-catching orange porcupine head, apologising, "Sorry, I know that you're not willing to eat with me, but because there are no more empty places, may I sit here?"

Ezart's food was fairly simple, consisting of a few buns. He aggressively looked up at Daren, then asked threateningly, "Are you an idiot? Can't you see that no one dares to come near me? Are you tired of living or what?"

"No, I'm not tired of living, it's because there are no more seats and it just so happens that there are empty seats here, so I came over," Daren answered seriously.

"You!"

The surrounding people started getting anxious, suspecting that Ezart will blow up this time. Ezart helplessly buried his face in his large hands, an action that made the cafeteria descend into deathly silence...

"Hahahahaha!!!" A booming laughter erupted, Ezart grabbed his abdomen, intermittently pounding his fists on the table to express his belly full of laughter. After howling for a good while, he saw Daren with his "I am just nerdy" look, still standing foolishly to one side, not knowing how to proceed.

Unable to contain it, Ezart burst out into another laughing fit. "You, you really, really have a screw loose! Haha!"

"Huh? Do I really have a screw loose?" Daren immediately activated his microchip to scan for any loose screws.

"Sit down!"

Ezart patted the empty seat beside him, motioning for Daren to sit down. Daren obediently sat down and turned to say, "I don't have a loose screw, you must be mistaken."

Ezart was momentarily dumbfounded, before hugging his abdomen sniggering, "You, you are just too great... god! My stomach... it hurts."

"Stomachache?" Daren was chowing on a chicken wing when he immediately became anxious. He put down his chicken wing asking with

concern, "Are you ok? Do you want me to accompany you to the sick bay?"

Another bout of booming laughter.

Having laughed too much, his stomach was really starting to hurt, so Ezart was a little exasperated, "No need for that! Just quickly eat your food; if you stop talking with that nerdy look, I'll be fine."

Daren blinked, wanting to say that he does not have a nerdy look, but since Ezart was asking him to eat, then he had better finish it quickly since lunch break was ending soon. At that point, Daren began shoving food into his mouth, chewing at a rate of 10 bites per second, rapidly clearing his mountainous pile of food.

(Gege's instruction: Chew more when you eat to prevent indigestion.)

Ezart was dumbstruck by this method of eating; never had he seen someone eat with this speed, like a movie in fast forward. In addition, where the hell was this puny fellow keeping his food? As the peaks of the twin mountains crumbled, the uncontrollable twitching of Ezart's mouth increased.

"I'm done." Daren took out his handkerchief to wipe his mouth after finishing the last mouthful while simultaneously looking at his watch. Good, there was still time for a nap. He immediately flopped onto the table announcing, "I'm going to take a nap."

(Gege's instruction: It's a must to take a nap in the afternoon.)

"We're starting class in 3 minutes."

Ezart casually reminded, although he himself wasn't mindful of such things. He pulled out a martial arts novel and began reading. After a few pages, the person next to him suddenly raised his head saying, "30 seconds to the bell."

He actually grabbed Ezart's hand and dragged him towards the direction of the classroom. Ezart was initially shocked and therefore allowed himself to be dragged along. But as he regained his senses and tried shaking off Daren's hand, he realised that he couldn't...

This kid is strong! A trace of caution flashed past Ezart's eyes.

"Hurry up! There's only 5 seconds before we're late. We definitely can't be late for class," Daren yelled.

At the completion of his sentence, both the "tow truck" and the one being towed appeared at the door to the classroom with a "woosh", then into their respective seats with another burst of speed. Daren heaved a sigh of relief, feeling lucky that they weren't late; he happily took out his textbooks and stationary. As long as he did not violate gege's instructions, all was good.

T-that speed, wasn't it a little too fast... Ezart was stunned, belatedly realising that he was at his own seat. How was he already in his chair when he was last being dragged into the classroom?

Ezart looked at Daren suspiciously, the latter also realising that Ezart was looking at him, looked up immediately and flashed a brilliant smile. He realised that his glasses were knocked sideways from the "vigorous exercise" just now. He adjusted his glasses while he smiled, it slanted again, he adjusted it once more.

Really nerdy... Ezart turned his head back. Forget it! It's impossible for this kind of nerd.

"Battle has a long history... from the era of the existence of countries... there are Chinese martial arts, Japanese kendo, Western fencing, *etc.* From the formation of the trade groups till recent times, the world had been engulfed in disputes, with the people's emphasis on keeping whole... battle had become the generalised standard, irregardless of location or weapon, the last survivor was the victor; this has become Battle's cruel identity..."

Daren speedily jotted down the teacher's words while highlighting the important points in his textbook, his pen flying across the page. Although highlighting for revision was pretty useless as the microchip in his brain gave him a photographic memory, meaning it was impossible for him to forget something once he laid eyes on it.

His hands moved on their own accord, his eyes not required to follow the line of letters. He turned around and found Ezart still sleeping... He whispered harshly, "Ezart, Ezart?"

Ezart's sleeping skill was originally impressive - he could not be woken even if the whole class was in riot - but when faced with his name, he still possessed the reflexive response of all normal people. After ignoring Daren for a few times, Ezart finally went berserk; he ripped the table

apart in one move, furiously yelling, "Ezart, Ezart, Ezart! What are you calling me for?"

Within the classroom, silence once again reigned, Daren blinked in explanation, "You shouldn't sleep in class, you must be serious in your studies!"

A vein popped on Ezart's forehead, this guy indeed had a screw loose... He prodded Daren's forehead with his index finger, "I'm warning you! I haven't pummelled you because you are a little interesting, but if you annoy me again, I will definitely let you lie unconscious in a hospital tomorrow, the day after, and the day after that!"

Facing this threat, Daren gaped and with a confused expression said, "I didn't bother you, I was just telling you that you shouldn't sleep when you're in class."

"You!"

Ezart slumped back onto his chair. Who was rearing this heavenly soldier? He was so nerdy that he deserved a beating, yet so nerdy that others can't bear to hit him.

(Devon Solaris and Theodore Avery in their respective locations let out a big sneeze.)

"Here! I'll let you read the notes I made while you were sleeping."

Daren happily pushed his notebook over, sharing generously with his

friend. No matter what Ezart may have been thinking, Daren had taken the fellow whom he had lunch with and attended class with as a friend. Now he was sharing notes.

Ezart's brain was engulfed in a maelstrom. He rubbed his face in defeat, tiredly replying, "For god's sake, no one pays attention to battle history lessons, okay?"

"Huh?" Daren blinked uncomprehending.

"Only physical fitness type of class is the true battle curriculum, the rest of them are for sleeping in, understand?"

Ezart impatiently explained while looking at Daren who was still exhibiting his nerdy expression. One look and anyone could tell that he definitely did not understand!

He stamped in fury as he roared, "Anyway, you listen to your class, don't disturb me - I will take practical lessons seriously when we come to it."

"Okay." Daren nodded, then as Ezart started thinking that he was finally free to once again slump over the desk and sleep, Daren shook him again saying, "So, do you want to copy my notes?"

"..."

"The so called practical curriculum is..." Ezart smashed his fists together forcefully, the lazy and sleepy attitude now totally gone, his whole body enlivened like a tiger preparing to hunt. "Smashing-your-fist-into-

someone's-face class!"

Saying that, Ezart walked straight into the massive gymnasium. While Daren was still mulling over the meaning of that phrase, Ezart had already walked away. He hurried to catch up but suddenly heard "Ezart" uttered by the classmate beside him. He slowed his pace out of curiosity and widened his zone of reception and realised that half of his classmates were talking about Ezart.

"Ezart sent 3 students from class A to the hospital last time."

"Are you for real? It's class A! Isn't that the class that's known for having the guy<sup>2</sup> who can single-handedly take out our whole class?"

"Didn't you know, if it wasn't because he got close to zero for all his other subjects, he wouldn't be in our class."

Daren carefully analyzed these information. In that case, Ezart must be very strong. The microchip in Daren instinctively wanted to analyze strong individuals, because becoming strong in order to protect gege is his primary function.

Daren unwaveringly walked towards the gymnasium. Even the classmates calling from behind did not make it in time to stop him. His figure disappeared into the gymnasium...

"Oh my god! He just walked in there like that. Does he know what's inside the gymnasium?"

"This gym is a massive battle simulator..."

\*\*\*\*\* Chapter 3 END \*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

1Ezart: (or Izatte) his chinese name is 伊萨特, pronounced Yi Sa Te. We named him Izatte before, but the author just published his official English name (Ezart)

2The guy: refers to a student in class A, different from Ezart's class. Previously this was mistranslated to refer to Ezart.

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 4

In truth, Daren Solaris knew that it was a massive battle simulator - one of YeLan Academy's highlights. It was rumoured to have been specially developed by the headmaster and had been a deciding factor in Daren's decision to attend YeLan Academy.

Upon entering the simulator, a large screen appeared before Daren. On-screen was a sagely old man, whose face was covered with so many wrinkles that mosquitoes dared not land on it for fear of being squashed in the drooping facial folds. But this "virtuous" old man revealed a slightly cheeky smile and said flippantly,

"Hello my little friend, I am the headmaster of YeLan Academy, Antonias1. Please enter your account name and password, then you may battle to your heart's content."

"I don't have an account or a password," Daren honestly replied.

"I see, you're a new friend. Not to worry, come create an account and we'll be good to go. Pick any alias you like," the irreverent old man said smilingly.

Daren thought for a second and said, "Dark Sun, password is xxxx."

"I see, my little friend Dark Sun, choose a battle suit and weapon that you prefer." As soon as Antonias finished speaking, rows of battle suits stacked as high as the sky appeared by his side. There were suits ranging from Pikachu-themed suspenders and blue-white slippers, to

Mazinger's 2 suits; even weapons ranging from blackboard dusters and chalk to tanks and cannons were available.

Daren playfully looked through the arsenal of options; initially he had wanted to decline any weapons because Dark Sun was a weapon in itself, but Gege's instruction arose again.

(Do not let others discover your abilities!)

If that's the case, then I can't go into battle... Daren thought. From the corner of his eyes, Daren suddenly spied a simple suit with virtually no defensive capabilities. It was a pink shirt with matching jeans and knee-high boots. Its most important aspect was the protective visor.

Daren's plan was simple; as long as others could not recognise him, he could fulfill Dark Sun's basic functions without violating Gege's instructions.

"I want that suit," said Daren gesturing towards the simple outfit.

"No problem!"

Instantly, the outfit was superimposed on Daren. He then messed up his hair in order to prevent himself from being discovered. While admiring his reflection, he noticed that his lean frame had become more pronounced by his shirt and his height was well emphasized by his jeans and high boots. Even his messy hair served to make him look more suave.

Wiping off his faint smile, Daren strengthened his disguise further by

retrieving the serious unsmiling facade of Dark Sun from his microchip. In a flash, all traces of a smile vanished from his face, and his nerdy demeanor turned sinister.

"As for the weapon?"

Dark Sun frowned; he knew he could not refrain from using a weapon. It would inevitably take lives if he were to fight live participants with real weapons, therefore, he could only rely on virtual weapons to avoid hurting anyone. Though, his laboratory simulations had all been with live weapons.

"Give me a dagger and a handgun."

The holster was clipped onto Dark Sun's right thigh and the dagger attached to the inside of his boot.

"Since it's your first time entering, I, Antonias, will give you a brief explanation. Your opponents can be anything from bizarre species and robots to little girls and even pregnant women. Some of them might be virtual, others your classmates. You can form alliances, or treat everyone as your enemy. In any case, the last survivor is the victor. Have a happy battle, Dark Sun."

The doors to the simulator gradually opened and a ray of light emerged from within. Dark Sun turned towards it slowly and waited to enter.

Battle simulator, activated.

When it came to battle simulators, Daren could not be more familiar. Ever since he was seven, his entire life had revolved around check ups, operations, non stop battles and helping researchers accumulate data for further improvement.

Analysis: Battle scenario no different from reality. 26 enemies nearby, 20 of which expressing hostility, 10 with intent to attack, 2 within danger zone.

"Where did this idiot come from? Choosing a suit with no defenses. He must thinks he's some sort of celebrity, trying to play cool like that."

"Ha! So ridiculous! Look at him. He's actually carrying a hand gun. He's just asking to be killed."

Daren turned around and saw two people dressed in light battle armour. One had a sub-machine gun and the other had a shotgun.

"Alright, kill him quick - there are still lots of people to blast. Hahaha!"

The person holding the sub-machine gun took aim, revealing a frenzied smile at the thought of the kill...

Tratatatatata -----

The sound of gunshots filled the air as empty shells rapidly hit the ground forming clouds of dust. Under this intense fire, no one would've been able to escape.....

"Where is he!?" shouted the two gun toting boys, but... only shells littered the floor, with nobody in sight.....

"Urgh!"

The boy with the sub-machine gun looked around frantically. A sudden gurgling sound made him spin around only to have blood splatter his face. He stared in shock at the large gash on his friend's throat, gushing an endless stream of blood. In a few seconds, he was relegated to the "dead" category by the system, and his limp body crumpled to the ground with malcontent evident in his eyes.

"Bastard! Where are you!" Snarled the boy with the sub-machine gun. He was angry but also afraid enough to shower the perimeter with bullets. But before he could finish his ammunition, he had already collapsed, still unaware of the reason. Just as he was about to protest that it was a system error, that he was not dead, he heard a voice...

"So fast." An eye catching boy in a Mazinger's suit, with porcupine-like hair and a dragon tattoo on his face, walked over and flipped the "carcass" onto his back.

"Stupid! You were attacked even before the guy whose throat was slit."

Seeing that the carcass was staring at him with an unyielding expression, Ezart3 snorted, "The dagger moved so fast that you were killed before you could even feel it entering and leaving your guts."

The carcass gasped and looked towards his abdomen. Indeed there was a wound there. Although it wasn't big, blood was pouring out of it like water from a tap, reflecting the accuracy and lethality of the strike.

"Where did such a strong guy come from? From the looks of it, it can't be Shain Baylian."

Ezart revealed an intrigued smile. He slammed his fists together with a clamour of steel and an immense battle fervour as he strode in the direction of the person in question.

Dark Sun walked alone. Though he detected several people tracking him, he didn't pay them any attention unless they were intent on attacking. His primary objective was to find Ezart. Whether it was just for observation or personally engaging in battle, Dark Sun just wanted to record a strong opponent's battle for storage in his microchip. This was a way for him to become stronger and achieve the goal of protecting Gege.

However, Dark Sun did not manage to locate Ezart nor discover any other strong opponents even after searching for some time. He watched a few battles but none measured up to his standards.

In that case, if the others were to be eliminated, the remaining survivors would contain Ezart. Dark Sun made up his mind and reached towards his holster.

"He's starting to attack..." As the notion floated into the consciousness of the crowd tracking him, they prepared to defend. Dark Sun took a step forward and vaulted off the wall into the air, letting out a volley of rapid shots. Several muffled cries and the thuds of collapsing bodies could be

heard in response.

None of them were Ezart, nor were they skillful enough. Dark Sun holstered his gun, drew his dagger and skillfully sought out his opponents. Before they were able to catch a glimpse of him, they were killed with a single blow to the brain-stem and collapsed inexplicably to the ground while cursing the system for malfunctioning. And these were only his milder kills.

"He appeared so suddenly - I froze for a second before firing, but he evaded my shots easily. Then like a leopard on the hunt, he effortlessly left, searching for his next prey. It was then that I realised that my throat was spewing blood and the system was grounding my body, telling me that I had been killed by Dark Sun... Dark Sun - I'll never forget that name," said one of Dark Sun's victims.

Still not him. Dark Sun's blade was dripping with blood, yet he still could not locate Ezart or any other equally strong opponent. He could only continue wandering aimlessly.

Suddenly, the sounds of intense battle drifted to his ears, Dark Sun spent a millisecond analysing before deciding to head towards the sound. With his enhanced speed, he was able to quickly reach the location.

Dark Sun surveyed the surrounding area. The houses and streets had been left half destroyed, with gaping holes in sections of walls, broken street lights, uprooted trees and shattered windows visible in the area.

Upon seeing this, Dark Sun knew that he had finally found a strong

opponent. He nimbly jumped onto the remaining wall of a building and stealthily made his way forward. After ten metres, the scenery changed from half to complete destruction. At the very end, only a large rocky formation was left, its original form now indeterminable. It was then that he finally saw the battleground.

Two people were engaged in battle: one was the well-built boy with spiky, orange hair - the elusive Ezart. The other boy stood in stark contrast to Ezart. He was very lean, yet significantly taller than the gangly Dark Sun. He was approximately 180cm, and wore an ancient Chinese garb while wielding dual sai.

Dark Sun stood on a derelict wall with his eyes fixed intently on the battle. He watched Ezart's massive Mazinger gloves deal heavy and crushing blows that created craters on the ground. It was evident that he was to blame for roughly 80% of the surrounding destruction.

His opponent, though physically weak, appeared to be one of the high agility types. He was like a cunning and unpredictable snake, effortlessly dodging Ezart's punches. However, it was impossible for someone as weak as him to severely injure the fully armoured Ezart with one strike. Hence, he was reduced to slicing a little here and there to slowly sap away his opponent's strength.

This was extremely dangerous; if Ezart were to land a blow, the slender boy would probably be unable to get back onto his feet. But, that was if Ezart could land a blow. In truth, compared to the monstrous yet sluggish punches, the flying rock debris was more problematic, causing cuts and scratches time and again.

Although both had good fighting abilities, Ezart's colossal strength was

of no help to Dark Sun, whereas the unpredictability of the boy in the Chinese garb was beneficial for improving Dark Sun's ability to dodge.

As the aces faced off, the agile boy suddenly turned his hips in a seemingly impossible angle to evade Ezart's fists, and simultaneously closed the gap between himself and Ezart. The dual sai snuck its way through a gap in the armour, into Ezart's throat and emerged out the back of his head.

Surprisingly, the impaled Ezart was still stubbornly crushing the tiny waist of his opponent. The boy, unable to break free, forcefully tore his sai free. Torrents of blood spewed in all directions, causing the system to gradually ground Ezart, who was finally forced to release his opponent.

"You just don't give up, do you? You've already lost, yet you continue to strangle me" the boy in the Chinese garb remarked coldly.

Ezart slowly lifted his gaze towards him, battle fervour still visible in his eyes.

"If you want to fight, you'll have to wait for the next practice session," the boy wearing the Chinese garb turned around, speaking to the desolate area of destruction.

Daren frowned, he had thought that he wouldn't be discovered; had he somehow carelessly revealed himself? Nevertheless, Daren had no intention of hiding. Engaging in battle had always been the only way to become stronger.

“Don’t think that I didn’t notice because I was battling Ezart. You were all throwing daggers at our backs!” The boy continued, with a contemptuous look.

Daren paused, realising that the boy wasn’t referring to him. After a split second's consideration, he decided to let the boy resolve all matters before engaging him in a satisfying heart thumping battle.

However, something strange happened; after the loud declaration by the boy, all the people lurking in the surrounding area were so frightened that they hastily fled regardless of whether they were the back stabbing person in question or not. Who knew who that was? It was simply best not to be the scapegoat...

Daren sensed that the players who had been lying in ambush were being pursued by a group, consisting of members whose fighting potential were greater than his earlier opponents. Within moments, the escaping players had all been dealt with.

Three of the pursuers returned to the boy in the Chinese garb. From the looks of respect on their faces, it was easy to tell that they were his subordinates or minions. Amongst them was a man wielding dual hand guns, an ice queen<sup>5</sup> with long claws and an unreadable dwarfish guy.

“All taken care of?” the boy in the Chinese garb asked woodenly.

“We were unable to locate one,” the girl said as she looked at the him, her icy expression melting slightly.

"There's still one left?" asked the boy, revealing a displeased expression.

His subordinates became slightly flustered, but they simply could not locate the last remaining person.

Suddenly, a sliver of doubt flashed across the boy's eyes; he turned towards a nearby crumbling wall and scanned the shadows suspiciously. Was it simply an illusion? He was somewhat uncertain. Yet, he was unable to detect any human presence. Besides, if someone had been hiding there, there should have been some movement when he had scanned the area.

After staring for some time and being unable to discern any anomalies, the boy gradually turned around, dismissing it as paranoia. He had not heard of any specialists from the participating classes having the skills to elude him.

Daren silently observed the boy. Just as he turned away, Daren leapt out, felling the man with the dual hand guns with a single strike. He simultaneously kicked the ice queen aside and after regaining his balance, punched the dwarfish man away.

Although the boy in the Chinese garb was taken by surprise, it was obvious that he had received specialised martial arts training and had to be an expert to have defeated Ezart. The dual sai reflexively parried a blow and the air resounded with the crisp clash of metal. Sai and dagger met repeatedly at speeds that surpassed both the wielders' expectations.

Daren was astonished. Although this was not his greatest speed, he should have already exceeded the range of human comprehension and

reflex. To think that there was someone who could keep up with his attacks.

The boy in question, however, was having overwhelming amounts of trouble. At first glance, he seemed to have the upper hand, but upon further analysis, it was apparent that the usage of his dual sai required great coordination and thought. Yet, the speed of the incoming blows were not giving him the opportunity to think. He was relying completely on his body's reflexes for every attack and parry. How long could he sustain this? His expression was grim.

This person was strong, very strong. He had already reached his limit, but it seemed as if his opponent still had further room to manoeuvre..... The boy in the Chinese clothes easily understood these facts.

"Who are you?" He finally could not resist asking. The result of his momentary distraction was a long gash to his forearm.

"Dark Sun."

In the past, Dark Sun would never be distracted during a battle with such a pointless thing as giving his name to an opponent. But he was no longer just an emotionless fighting machine. He was also Daren Solaris, and Daren Solaris felt that since the other party had asked, and he had the resources to answer, there could be no harm in doing so. In addition, gege had allowed him to make decisions that pandered more to his emotions, therefore Daren answered.

"Your name?" He was even slightly curious about his opponent's name.

"Shain Baylian6!"

Growled the boy through clenched teeth. The movements of his arms had slowed because of his wound, further compromising his situation. Damn it! How can he execute such complex attacks with such an ordinary dagger?

Although Daren knew that once he increased his speed, Shain would immediately be defeated, he was in no hurry to do so. Shain Baylian's snake-like contortions were well worth referencing. Daren was happy to observe, even reducing his speed so that the battle would not conclude too quickly.

He decreased his speed? Although it was strange, Shain did not put too much thought into it and instead increased the rate of his attacks. His body struck and stilled like a rattle snake in battle. Unless they were a powerful cyborg, most people would not have been able to withstand his attacks.

This was why Ezart repeatedly lost to Shain and treated him as his greatest rival. Ezart's naturally gifted monstrous strength coupled with his specialised training made him almost universally undefeatable. This was also one of the reasons he was feared in the academy. Despite all that, whenever he battled Shain Baylian, another freak with snake-like dexterity, he was continuously defeated.

Daren was savouring the moment like precious rain in a drought. Although there had been various battle machines in the laboratory, they had all been modeled after average people. There had never been an opponent with such unique abilities to fight against. Of course, Dark Sun, whose primary objective was to become stronger, studiously recorded

the battle data.

But unbeknownst to Dark Sun, while he was recording others, he was also revealing his battle strategies. A massive screen for public viewing in front of an empty plaza had been installed outside the YeLan Academy Battledome. It had begun as a multitude of small screens displaying individual battles.

As the participants began to die off, the divisions of the screen decreased, with each display gradually increasing in size. Only at this point did it become a spectacle to behold. Every student on the outside avidly watched every battle. Some watched purely for entertainment, others to watch and learn, and of course, a sizable portion was there to support their favourite idols.

At that moment, there was only one battle on screen. Although two of Shain Baylian's subordinates had yet to die, they did not dare to act rashly. They were both aware that when Shain was engaged in battle, he detested being interrupted by others. Therefore, the screen was focused solely on the two boys fighting.

Everyone was dumbstruck, eyes riveted on the battle on-screen. This was a rare sight. In the past, this audience would be gossiping, analysing battles, cheering for their idols and being as noisy as a market place. But at that moment, a blanket of silence had descended over the crowd.

"Has Shain Baylian finally met his match? The guy, who can't be defeated, has met his match?" someone mumbled after a prolonged silence.

"Is he at a disadvantage?" another muttered with an unbelieving expression.

"Who the hell is Dark Sun? He's quick, his movements are even faster than Shain Baylian... how can he be so fast?"

When faced with that question, the crowd looked at each other, breaking out in a chorus of questions: "Is he from your class?" "Or is he someone from outside the academy who applied to participate in this battle?" "Does anyone know Dark Sun?"

Even though the scene was like the explosion of a wok<sup>7</sup> that had been left to boil for too long, Ezart was unaffected by the ruckus. He already knew that Dark Sun was strong, and had been trailing him when he unexpectedly met Shain Baylian; the two of them aggravated each other as per normal, and Ezart lost as per normal...

But he was not disappointed in the slightest, because another strong opponent had emerged from the Academy, one who was stronger than Shain Baylian! That's right! Ezart saw right from the start, that this Dark Sun's ability was greater than Shain's..... No, his ability greatly exceeded Shain's!

"Shain Baylian will definitely lose."

Ezart's words resounded in the noisy plaza and captured everyone's attention, a ripple of silence fanned out from Ezart.

Then, as if to verify Ezart's words, Dark Sun launched his attacks fiercely.

Shain, who had long been worn out, sustained more injuries to his arms. A few more clashes sent his dual sai flying, which then lodged all the way to their hilts in the ground and a derelict wall respectively.

Shain knew that his defeat was imminent. He was neither surprised, nor did he continue to struggle, but instead revealed a sinister smile, saying “Dark Sun, I will remember you.”

The dagger pierced Shain just below his smile, causing vibrant blood to blossom down his throat.

“Yes, Shain Baylian, I will remember you too.” Dark Sun said matter-of-factly; he would definitely create a file in his microchip for Shain Baylian and his martial art techniques.

Shain Baylian revealed a smile that seemed oddly content as he slowly collapsed...

\*\*\*\*\* Chapter 4 END \*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

1 Antonias: Chinese name 阿纳伊, pronounced Ana Yi.

2 Mazinger: An old mecha manga and anime series. The manga suit most likely refers to robot-like armor.

3 Ezart: Izatte's name has been changed to Ezart, according to Yu Wo, this is his official English name.

4 Sai: the plural of sai... is sai. For info on the weapon itself check wiki.

6 Ice queen: This refers to a girl with an icy expression, rather than an ice wielder

6 Shain Baylian: Chinese name 白莲星, pronounced Báilián Xīng.

7 Wok: is a round-bottomed cooking vessel originating in China.

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 5

"I was wondering where you'd run off too; so you went off to get food!" said Ezart as he roughly gifted Daren with a punch to the head. The latter was found gorging on a pile of food, large enough that he seemed buried in it.

"Ahm ooo unhgreh....." Daren tried to talk while chewing.

"Didn't you just have a meal?" Ezart grumbled as he unceremoniously ripped open a packet of chips, stuffing handfuls into his mouth as he sat down. He then offhandedly asked, "Hey, where did you run off to just now? I didn't see you at all. Don't tell me you've been eating here all this time."

"Noo wey, ah deed goh in!" Daren protested through a mouthful of food.

Ezart eyed Daren. He suspected that Daren was Dark Sun. It seemed too much of a coincidence that the day Daren transferred to the school just happens to be the day Dark Sun appeared. But looking at him now, with his hair parted and combed down the sides, his nerdy pair of glasses, neatly pressed school uniform and an endless vibe of nerdiness, he seemed nerdy no matter which way one looked at him.

Ezart smacked his head, It was impossible. Daren couldn't be Dark Sun - they were just too different. Their auras were like night and day. Dark Sun had a chilly, menacing aura, which totally contrasted Daren's nerdiness.

Ezart sighed and laid down with his arms behind his head, "Who's this Dark Sun guy? If he isn't someone from the Academy, then there's no way to know if he'll continue to participate in the mock battles. What if he doesn't participate anymore?"

Daren blinked and said, "So what if he doesn't participate, does it matter?"

Ezart bolted upright, exclaiming, "Of course it matters! If he doesn't participate then I can't fight him. To think that I actually put so much effort into tailing him just to let that Shain Baylian reap the rewards!"

Daren lowered his head and continued stuffing his face. Because of his unique body composition, he had no choice but to replenish significant amounts of energy used up after every battle for him to continue functioning. He pondered as he ate. Originally, he had no intention to continue fighting, since he had already seen Ezart and Shain battle. However, if he did not fight it out with Ezart, it looked as if he would be greatly disappointed.

"Then again, he could be from the Elite Combat Section. Maybe in a moment of blood-rush he decided to enter the battle simulator for fun." Ezart considered, now believing it to be more and more likely.

"Elite Combat Section?" Daren immediately raised his head to ask.

"Oh yeah, you're new here, so you still don't know." Ezart laid down again, and lazily began to explain, "Since YeLan Academy is a combat school, classes are allocated A to D, based on fighting prowess. Baylain, from before, is from Class A, we're in class D, also known as "Let the cows

graze"1 class. We're just borderline passers. Shouldn't you already know this?"

He had no idea. He absentmindedly stuffed another bun into his mouth, not knowing whether to laugh or cry. Surely his gege would not place him in Class D just to keep him from attracting attention... right?

Ezart's gaze suddenly darkened. "Elite Combat Section, shortened to ECS; it is said that there are no more than twenty people in that class and every single one of them is a monster."

"Monster?" Daren spun his head towards Ezart in shock, "Monsters can attend human schools too? "

Ezart slowly turned to look at Daren as if he were an idiot. But this kid, with a foolish and shocked expression that made people want to hit him, seemed hopelessly unaware of his own mistakes.

Ezart exasperatedly explained, "Monster is a metaphor... meaning, the people in that class are so strong that they no longer seem human."

"Oh," Daren nodded, showing that he understood. Strong fighters ... Dark Sun's personality awoke, his dull eyes sharpened. He asked, "Where are the members of ECS?"

"Who knows? It is said that they're so strong that they don't even need to attend classes... usually they help the principal with high level missions... but that's just a rumour! No one knows the truth of the matter; the other students are still speculating whether the ECS actually exists or

not.

"Even you and Baylian can't join the Elite Combat Section?"

Ezart stared at Daren. This kid really doesn't care about other people's self esteem...

"I don't know about Baylian, but the headmaster asked me before; I refused though."

Daren looked curiously at Ezart, he had assessed Ezart to be someone who just wanted to fight strong people no matter what. Why would he refuse?

"It's not like there aren't benefits to joining that class, but..." Ezart grimaced, "before graduation, you'd have to complete twenty of the headmaster's assignments. That didn't sit well with me, so I didn't bother."

"Oh." Upon hearing this, Daren also dismissed the idea of entering the Elite Combat Section. He only needed to listen to gege instructions; no one else's mattered.

"Alright kiddo, I've got something to do, so I gotta go. I'll walk you to the school gate, or else someone as daft as you will get pummeled by the seasoned dudes as a warning." Ezart himself had no idea how it happened. He was the type to always get into fights at school, so this was actually the first time he had thought of protecting someone else.

"I'm not Kiddo, my name is Daren Avery." Daren protested with wide eyes.

"Daren Avery ... that's so hard to pronounce."

"Then just call me Dar, that's what my gege calls me."

"Okay, Dar, let's go. If you don't hurry up, I won't care anymore and just let you take a beating. Maybe then you'll wisen up." Ezart raised an eyebrow, thinking it a good idea.

"D-don't be like that!"

Daren stood up hurriedly; if someone wanted to shake him up, he wouldn't know how to stick to his brother's instructions. To protect himself, but not reveal his strength - he felt as if he stuck between a rock and a hard place.

Daren hurriedly cleared up his leftovers, while stealing glances at Ezart, as if afraid that he would be left behind. Watching this scene, Ezart could not help thinking how hopeless Daren was. He had no idea why he was going this far to protect this guy. Worse still, he had actually thought this kid was Dark Sun. He must be going crazy!

"Are you done?"

Ezart impatiently urged, to which Daren hurriedly responded, "Okay, okay, let's go."

Ezart place his hands in his pockets and went ahead on his own, leaving Daren to catch up.

"Ezart, where are you off to in such a hurry? Dinner?"

Daren pestered Ezart with questions as he walked, the latter raised his eyebrows in response, not bothering to open his mouth to explain. Daren asked some more questions, and as long as they were not about Ezart, they were all answered. When it came to questions about Ezart himself, they were completely ignored.

"Don't ask about me anymore," Ezart eventually said.

"Oh, okay," Daren obediently replied.

The two of them walked in silence until they were at the school gate. Ezart believed that if Daren was seen walking with him, other students would not dare to bother Daren due to Ezart's notoriety. However, as Ezart turned to bid goodbye to him...

He found Daren foolishly staring ahead. Despite being prodded by Ezart a few times, Daren did not respond and instead blankly raised his finger to point in the direction he was facing...

Ezart gazed in the direction of Daren's finger. In the shade of a tree next to the school gate, Shain Baylian lazed on a chair. Next to him was the ice queen carrying drinks, the man wielding dual hand guns, and the dwarfish man from before.

"Ezart." Shain leisurely watched Ezart, as he sat there sipping his drink.

"Shain Baylian." Ezart raised an eyebrow, a look of disdain on his face.

Shain Baylian's attire was even more exaggerated than in the simulation. He was still wearing Chinese-styled clothes, but the difference was that this had a pair of dragons intricately embroidered in gold thread, and decorated with gemstones. He was rotating a black diamond ring on his right thumb out of habit, when he nonchalantly asked, "I heard your class had a new transfer student today."

"So what?" Ezart was evidently repulsed by Shain. He let it go in the battle simulator because Shain's fighting ability satisfied his lust for battle. But when it came to reality, Shain was just a slovenly rich kid, the type Ezart utterly detested.

"A transfer student arrives on the same day that Dark Sun appears; what say you?" Shain had a brief glimpse of Daren from the corner of his eyes and was a little surprised to find Ezart walking with someone who looked like he was up for a beating.

When Ezart heard this, he began to laugh, and kept laughing for a long time... Shain Baylian narrowed his eyes dangerously.

"Here he is! The new transfer student is this guy beside me," Ezart blurted, unable to contain it any longer. He wanted to see the expression on Shain Baylian's face after he realised how far fetched his deductions were.

Shain was indeed dumbfounded, he had originally believed that Dark Sun would definitely be the new transfer student who had been mysteriously banished to class D. That was not much of an issue, since Ezart had also been banished to that class. However, this fellow.....

Shain pursed his lips. He did not like being wrong, but not to the extent that he would insist that Dark Sun was this nerdy fellow. This was somewhat of insult, an insult to a pro.

"Seems like it's a mistake. This kind of person... could never become Dark Sun, even if allowed to be reincarnated." Shain stood up, a haughty expression on his face, as if Daren was a lowly organism that would emerge from the kitchen or the sewers.

But he was Dark Sun. Daren remained silent even though he felt like laughing inside.

Ezart sneered, "What did you say? Watch yourself, he's also from an influential family, don't go pissing off people you shouldn't mess with."

Shain Baylian paused in his steps. Instead of being angered by the stinging comments, he held a strange smile, "People I shouldn't mess with? Ha, I'll tell you this, there will be no one that I can't mess with after today!"

"What a joke! The Solaris Emperor is someone you can never afford to mess with."

Ezart might not be an expert on the trading conglomerates, but even someone with no knowledge about such matters, could glean from newspapers, magazines, and roadside conversations, that the most powerful man, otherwise known as the uncrowned king, was the Solaris Emperor of the Solaris Federation.

"Solaris Emperor? I'm not sure if such a person will exist after today." Shain remarked, revealing a mirthless, arrogant smile.

"What do you mean by that?" Daren shouted all of a sudden.

Shain was slightly infuriated, to think that an insignificant transfer student would dare to raise his voice at him. If it wasn't for Ezart's abnormal strength, he would not have allowed him to speak like that.

"Hmph!"

Shain harrumphed snidely, his expression cold. Noticing his displeasure, the three people beside him became hostile; they unsheathed their weapons and advanced menacingly towards Daren...

Ezart's raised his muscular arm before Daren and glared maliciously at the encroaching trio, his frown making his tattooed face appear even more sinister.

"Forget it, today is an important day. I don't have the time to play with peasants such as these," Shain spoke, abruptly becoming unconcerned.

The trio immediately stopped in their tracks and obediently returned to

Shain's side. Shain Baylian gave a haughty laugh and left with a flick of his long garb.

"Who is he?" Daren... no, Dark Sun asked, his gaze exceptionally chilly behind the thick frames. He was rapidly analysing Shain's words to determine whether they were based purely on ego or on actual fact.

"Shain Baylian, Yue Baylian's son. I hear his father's economic power is second only to the Solaris Emperor's Solaris Federation," Ezart replied matter-of-factly.

In reality, he only knew the gist of it and wasn't too familiar with the truth of the matter. In any case, Baylian was very rich and powerful; even YeLan Academy, which requires equality among students, had to allow the admittance of Shain's three attendants.

Yue Baylian? Dark Sun instantly retrieved this person's information. He was the leader of the Lunaris Alliance. The might of the Lunaris Alliance was not to be underestimated; It was ranked second among the other organisations. Yue Baylian's character evaluation showed him to be an unpredictable, malevolent snake. Once his wrath was incurred, there was no telling when the fatal fangs would be at one's throat.

Upon learning this, Dark Sun's face became sullen, "Ezart..."

"What do you want?" Ezart looked at the kid beside him strangely. Is he shocked by Shain Baylians' family influence? Why is he acting so strange?

"I'm leaving, there's something I have to do, so I'm leaving." Dark Sun

dashed out of the school gates, departing like a gust of wind.

"Woah, this kid runs pretty fast! Is it because he's been chased by bullies often?" Ezart narrowed his eyes at Daren's departing silhouette.

Daren whipped out his mobile phone as he ran, dialing Devon Solaris' number. The phone rang again and again, yet no one answered. No, it was impossible. Daren knew gege's personality well. Even if he was in a conference with the leaders of the world, he would still answer his didi's call.

Daren dialled another number, and once it was connected, he asked, "Dr. Avery, where is my brother?"

There was a pause on the other end of the line, "Isn't he at the office... Wait! Dark Sun, the news is receiving a live feed..."

"My god! Dark Sun, your brother's company building has been seized by terrorists - they've installed enough explosives to wipe out the entire building. They're holding everyone hostage and demanding that your brother come out from his specialised office or they'll send everyone in the building to their graves!"

"Dark Sun, what are you up to?" Theodore Avery was unsettled, knowing it was impossible for Daren to stay uninvolved.

"Of course I'm going to save gege!" Daren yelled.

"Your identity will be revealed. Why don't we wait for a moment longer?"

Your brother is the Solaris Emperor, not a mild-mannered monk forbidden to harm others, perhaps he will find a way out of this situation..."

"No! We can't risk it!" Daren rejected outright.

"Dar, if your brother knew that you would expose your identity because of him and therefore become unable to live a normal life... he would be guilt ridden and upset," Theodore Avery earnestly advised. He fully understood how Devon Solaris wished for his brother to live the life of an ordinary teenager.

Daren was silent for a moment. He too knew of gege's well-meaning intentions, but he felt that gege's safety was a hundred times more important. If there was a way to save gege without revealing his identity... keeping his identity a secret? Wasn't he able to do that in the battle simulator?

Daren hastily said to Theodore, "Visor, clothes..."

"I see, that's a good idea. I will prepare them for you immediately, come back right away!"

"Yes!" Daren hung up, revving up his speed.

Gege! No matter if I'm Dark Sun or Daren Solaris, I won't let anyone harm you!

\*\*\*\*\* Chapter 5 END \*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

Let the cows graze: meaning slacker. So Ezart and Daren are in the "slacker class"

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 6

"Should I buy Japanese or Greek cuisine?"

"This is not the most pressing issue at the moment, Solaris Emperor."

"Oh?" Devon Solaris perused the long menu in his hand, wondering which of the two his little brother would prefer for dinner. "What is the most pressing issue at the moment then, Bill1?"

The solemn secretary flipped through his events list and reported evenly, "Solaris Emperor, my name is Kyle2, and the most pressing issue now is to reply to the terrorist's demands. Although an explosion would not affect this special office, many of our staff would be hurt; the company would then descend into stagnation and our reputation would be severely damaged."

"Oh? Isn't this something that the security personnel should sort out?" Devon raised an eyebrow, slightly displeased, "What are the security guards doing? First they lock me in here, not allowing me to go home, and now they can't even handle the situation? Tell the highest security executive to come see me!"

"The highest security executive was shot dead when he was activating the emergency lock down button for your office. I'm afraid he is unable to see you," Kyle said calmly as he typed "Searching for a Security Executive" in the vacancy section on his iPad.

"Oh?" Devon's eyes never left the menu. He then thought of something

and said, "Remember to publicise it when we compensate the executive's family. Don't let the media run a story calling me a bloodless, tearless vampire."

Kyle paused in his typing, and threw a strange glance at Devon. Cold-blooded, heartless Solaris Emperor..... this is already well known to the public. As his personal assistant, Kyle could definitely attest to the claim that the Solaris Emperor was irrefutably cold-blooded and heartless. Losing an employee only meant the delay of a work process, not the loss of a life.

But people were still willing to work for the Solaris Emperor because of a few perks: his generous salary and bonuses, comprehensive welfare benefits, and a fair reward and punishment system. The executive who had selflessly activated the emergency lock down button probably knew that even if he died, the compensation would be enough to feed his family for a few generations, especially since he was protecting the life of the Solaris Emperor himself. Kyle made a few calculations. The compensation will at least be in the tens of millions.

"Kyle?" Devon asked impatiently after not having received a reply.

"Yes, I understand," Kyle responded promptly as he realised he was spacing out. But he was still baffled. Solaris Emperor had never been concerned about his own reputation. Even when he was painted as a bloodless, tearless vampire, he never had any inclination to dispel any misconceptions, so why was he now.....?

Mm, didi must be hearing a lot of rumours outside. I can't be a bad example to didi. Devon put serious thought into building his image as a good person.

Kyle's attention was drawn to the news report on his iPad. After watching it for awhile, he heaved a sigh. Looks like today's matter won't be settled without a few thousand deaths. Kyle felt pity for these people. The reporter said, "Solaris Emperor, the terrorists are giving you an hour. If you aren't out by then, the entire building will be destroyed."

"Is that so?"

Devon Solaris frowned. A difficult situation had emerged, just when he had made up his mind to be a good example. Logically, he should not care about it and just stay in the specially constructed office where he would remain unharmed. Besides, if he were to really die, the resulting global financial crisis would be the real disaster.....

However, thousands of lives were currently hanging in the balance. Devon massaged his temples saying, "Alright, I'll go out."

As expected, he cares only for his own life... Kyle thought absentmindedly. Wait a second, what did he just say? He hastily mumbled, "Begging your pardon, Solaris Emperor, but could you perhaps repeat what your decision was?"

Devon raised an eyebrow. "I said, I will go out."

Kyle gaped. Although he reserved some criticism for the Solaris Emperor's indifference, he didn't really wish for him to head out. If the Solaris Emperor were to lose his life... It would be no joke, the entire world's economy would be in turmoil - the extent of the aftermath would be truly devastating.

"No Sir, you can't go out there! It's too dangerous! If anything were to happen to you, the entire economy would collapse!" Kyle loudly protested as he hastily stood up.

Devon was already standing and waved dismissively. "Don't worry, aren't they just terrorists? Just give them all the money they want. Even if they were hired by my enemies, I am confident I can give them ten times the amount and change their loyalties at the last moment."

"But, but..." Kyle protested, still worried.

"Kyle..." Devon abruptly turned around to ask, "Do you have a younger brother?"

"Eh? No, I don't..." Kyle stared with wide eyes. Today, it seemed as if something was not quite right with the Solaris Emperor. Not only was his behaviour completely out of character, he was also asking about irrelevant things at this crucial moment.

"Sometimes, for the sake of the younger brother, the older brother has no choice but to commit foolish acts." Devon smiled briefly. "Just stay here. When I'm not around, the Solaris Federation will depend on you to keep it functioning."

"I understand," Kyle said, feeling moved for the first time. This was the leader of the Solaris Federation, his leader.

Devon pressed the release button to the office and slowly stepped out...

On the streets, a hovercraft bike was racing past, weaving in and out between cars. The rider was heading straight for the nearby skyscraper. In truth, this was the tallest building in Asia, one of five head quarters belonging to the Solaris Federation.

The rider stopped before he neared the building; there were too many civilians and too much media coverage. If he were to charge into the skyscraper in front of the media, the terrorists would be the first to realise. Even the the most dim-witted, third-rate thief knew to use the seamless media coverage to monitor police movements and the situation outside.

"Oh! My god! Dark Sun, your stupid idiot brother actually walked out of the office. Get up there quick - they look like they are planning to abduct him from the roof."

Theodore Avery's agitated voice sounded from the ear piece which he had prepared specially for Dark Sun. Theodore was in charge of monitoring the current situation and relaying it to Daren so that he could make the optimal judgement.

Dark Sun briefly noted his surroundings. Since the skyscraper in question was the tallest among the surrounding structures, he would be unable to gain direct access to the roof via a neighbouring building. In that case, he would have to resort to a different method.

Dark Sun swerved his hoverbike to a halt beside a building closest in height to his target and swiftly entered the building, ascending via the elevator to the top floor. It was a couple of levels below the roof, but this

slight difference in height was hardly an obstacle for what he was about to attempt.

"Did you make a reservation, Sir?"

The waiter approached dutifully. This was a high class restaurant, but the customer before him was wearing an exceptionally unusual yet simple, fitted top, with trousers tucked into his long boots. He was also disregarding basic etiquette by wearing his shades indoor. However, the waiter noticed that although this patron's clothes looked casual, the workmanship was intricate, the material of fine quality, and the boots handmade from a renowned brand.

"Is there a big window from which you can see that building over there?" Dark Sun asked.

The waiter, assuming that Dark Sun only wanted a window seat, replied courteously, "Of course, this way please."

The waiter led Dark Sun before a full length window. A simple square table was placed before it. The waiter gracefully pulled out the seat for Dark Sun, but the latter seemed to have no intention of sitting down. The smile froze on the waiter's face, unsure of this patron's intentions.

Dark Sun looked out the window, this was certainly a good position. The building was tall enough, and coincidentally was in the shadow cast by his target. This would hide his silhouette from the spectators below.

Steel wings. Activate!

The malleable steel seeped from his bone marrows, forming the frame of his wings. Two pieces of feather-like steel pierced through his shirt bilaterally. Like a fledgling spreading its wings in fast forward, the steel feathers fanned out. In hardly a minute, wings spanning 6 metres had emerged from Daren's back.

"A... an... angel!" The waiter stumbled and fell backwards in shock, staring blankly at the winged patron.

Dark Sun turned around and gave an emotionless smile. "Wrong. I'm a demon."

The waiter continued to stare witlessly at those wings and realised that the seemingly soft feathers had become razor sharp. Is he really a demon?

Dark Sun lunged towards the window and smashed through the full length glass panel... Waiters and others rushed towards the commotion...

All they saw was a demon flying in the pale blue sky with an ethereal beauty.

"Interesting..... you're really not accepting my suggestion?"

Devon was slightly perturbed, but he still maintained his carefree appearance. To think that these people were completely unmoved despite the numerous lucrative conditions he had offered to undermine their relationship with their employers. Nothing seemed to be working, a

fact that greatly surprised Devon.

Traversing the business world from a tender age had earned Devon quite a few achievements. Debating, compromising, undermining were akin to breathing for him. Even a seasoned old hand could not escape from his grasp, so why was this small group of terrorists so persistent?

"Move!" A few hoodlums roughly dragged Devon along.

"Don't touch me!" Devon roared in fury, the majesty of the Solaris Emperor flaring up. He laughed coldly, " You don't have the qualifications to touch me. I can walk by myself."

He shook off the terrorist's arm and walked with regal grace towards the helicopter.

"What's that?" asked one of the terrorists when he noticed a suspicious object in the sky. It was hard to tell what it was. It seemed like a bird but was too big to be one.

He didn't need to think much further since the flying object in question seemingly withdrew its wings and plunged vertically downwards, landing heavily on the roof. Daren Solaris left a deep footprint on the concrete where he landed.

Devon was a little surprised. He turned around to see what could have "fallen" onto the rooftop of the country's tallest skyscraper.. A human? He blinked. Isn't that silhouette somewhat familiar?

The terrorists were struck dumb. They were unable to comprehend how a human could just fall from the sky.

"Who are you? Get away from that man!" The terrorist shouted, his massive machine gun already raised.

The other terrorists, sensing the situation, raised their weapons as well.

"Get on the helicopter," Dark Sun muttered to Devon.

"D-"

Dar!? Devon abruptly stopped himself from completing the name, as he recognised his little brother. Why is Dar here?

"Hurry up!" Dark Sun growled, turning his head slightly.

Devon frowned but climbed into the helicopter as instructed. But isn't this the terrorists' helicopter?

The terrorists were probably thinking the same thing and hence did not bother stopping Devon from getting in. But the moment Devon climbed inside, Dark Sun slammed the door shut, and broke the handle. He then whipped out his gun from the holster and killed the pilot to prevent the helicopter from taking off.

But the show was just starting. Dark Sun had asked his brother to enter the helicopter because its bullet proof material and could protect him

from stray bullets. He had also destroyed the handle to prevent the terrorists from seizing Devon, and last but not least...

Dar!? Devon pounded the bullet proof glass of the helicopter and pulled on the door with all his might, but it had been jammed shut by Dark Sun and was impossible to release.

...to prevent gege from rushing out to protect him... Dark Sun silently laughed at the thought.

Excluding Devon Solaris, there were twenty odd terrorists and Dark Sun remaining on the roof. Watching Dark Sun execute the pilot infuriated the gang and since their target was somewhere safe, they no longer had any restrictions. The nearest muscular terrorist roared as he sprayed bullets at Dark Sun from his heavy machine gun.

Dark Sun revealed a mirthless smile as he rapidly dodged the onslaught. The ground was pockmarked from the gunfire, but not a single bullet had touched Dark Sun.

Dark Sun was aware that the ultimate strategy for fighting a mass of people was to create confusion. He dashed speedily among the terrorists, causing a few to fire reflexively. The shots missed Dark Sun and instead hit their own. Soon enough quite a few people were lying on the ground groaning.

"Stop! Stop!" one of them yelled, recognising the unfavourable situation.

Realizing that they were harming their own, they quickly ceased fire. It was a pointless move because Dark Sun did not allow them any time to strategise. He immediately protracted razor sharp steel claws and with only a few swipes, people soundlessly crumpled to the floor.

Everyone was shocked. Some started shooting at Dark Sun again, but he dodged behind one of the terrorists, directing all fire at the unsuspecting human shield. Once his human shield was riddled with holes, Dark Sun would dodge behind another person. If the terrorists ceased fire, Dark Sun simply went on the offensive; the flash of his steel claws became the stuff of nightmares. Within moments, there were only ten left standing.

The terrorists ceased fire once again, but this time when Dark Sun made a swiped at a throat all he cut was air.

This was the first time he had made a mistake since leaving the laboratory. If he were the emotionless android that he had been before, he would not have had any reaction other than to follow up with another attack. However, now that his emotional switch was activated, he was slightly taken aback. During this brief period of hesitation, the terrorist had turned around and with a swift slash, which Dark Sun was unable to avoid completely, opened a gash on his arm.

Dark Sun paid no attention to his wound, but instead fixed his gaze on his attacker. The opponent was wielding a kris. It's blade was curved like a snake in motion and created a larger wound than a regular dagger.

Among the ten remaining, five of the terrorists discarded their guns in favour of various exotic weapons. There was a pair of ancient katara<sup>3</sup>, a massive morning star, a flail with an extremely long chain, a scythe and a

double-headed battle axe.

It was just like a weapon exhibit. Dark Sun became grim. There was something amiss. In normal circumstances, modern hoodlums were only armed with guns and maybe an additional dagger. Yet here were five people wielding weapons which could only be found in exhibitions.

In addition, the vibe that these people were emitting was different from the garden variety of hoodlums. However, Dark Sun was unable to pinpoint exactly what it meant. While he was contemplating these oddities, the five lunged forwards. The foremost was the double-headed axe wielder with bulging muscles.

The steel claws were too fine to block heavy weapons of this kind. Dark Sun decided to dodge the blows of the axe and opted to target his opponent's weaknesses instead.

Dark Sun nimbly spun on his leg, avoiding the swing of the axe while moving close to the attacker. The fatal claws were mere millimeters from the terrorist's throat when the kris arced towards Dark Sun's hand forcing him to withdraw rapidly. Sensing the danger approaching from behind, he hastily turned in time to narrowly avoid the morning star brushing against his arm.

He realized that the three people surrounding him had skills above par. Their coordination and team work were admirable and put him at a great disadvantage. He retreated a few steps, as he considered using his gun to resolve the situation. Before he could act upon it, he felt a strong killing intent from behind. He reflexively spun on his leg as the katara almost stabbed his chest. In a flash, Dark Sun grabbed the blade of the katara with both hands. His strength kept the terrorist stock still.

Although, both his hands were occupied with grasping the weapon, Dark Sun was not troubled. He raised his right leg and solidly kicked the terrorist, sending him flying five metres away. Most people would immediately go unconscious after receiving such a kick.

"Agh!"

Dark Sun's right arm was suddenly clobbered. He remembered then that there was another long range flail wielder. His thirst for blood unquenched by the successful sneak attack, the man struck again. However, this time Dark Sun was prepared. There was no way he was going to let this terrorist get away with it a second time. He latched onto the flail with unerring accuracy, and began rotating it in order to fling the terrorist away.

By then, the other three terrorists had reappeared. Brandishing their weapons, they launched intense attacks. The steel claws alone were insufficient for fending off these weapons. In addition, it was difficult to win with speed alone when surrounded by four opponents. Dark Sun felt pressured for the first time.

No! Dark Sun felt something was off kilter. Even at a battle school like Yelan Academy he could defeat so many with his speed, there was no reason for him to feel pressured in a fight with only five people.

While he was blocking the blows, he began analysing with his microchip. Within the exchanges of a few blows, he analysed that the speed and strength of these five people were three times that of a normal person.

Strength can indeed be increased exponentially with intense training. But increasing speed was no simple matter. It was possible to increase one's speed by 50%. However, to be three times faster than normal... one would require a talent found in only one in million. How could there be five of them together at the same place?

The present circumstances did not permit Dark Sun further rumination. He could only note down his suspicions and continue battling the five curious individuals.

Soon enough the assassin that had been kicked aside stood up and rejoined the fray, causing Dark Sun's position to become even more unfavourable.

Although he was inflicting damage on his opponents, wounds gradually accumulated on Dark Sun's body. The worst injury was the initial wound inflicted by the flail which was impeding the movements of his right arm. For someone who relied on intricate movements and superhuman speed like Dark Sun, it was a severe problem.

"Didi! Didi!" Seeing his little brother injured, Devon picked up a small fire extinguisher and repeatedly bashed it against the bullet proof window with all his might. However, the helicopter window was so thick that it could not be shattered. But even then Devon refused to give up, and continued bashing it violently...

Ring ring...

Devon paused and looked towards his mobile phone. He originally

wanted to ignore the ringing, but the ring tone indicated that it was from home. The only person who would call from home would be Theodore Avery. Devon paused and answered the phone.

"Devon?" It was indeed Theodore's voice.

"You!" Devon roared in anger, "Why did you let Dar come? Do you know he's hurt?"

"Eh... I know. But that's not the crux. Dark Sun wanted me to deliver weapons. I am already in the building, but was stopped by the policemen. Think of a solution quickly, or Dark Sun will receive even more severe injuries."

Upon hearing that, Devon dialed Secretary Kyle's number without hesitation.

\*\*\*\*\* Chapter 6 END \*\*\*\*\*

Notes:

- 1Bill: romanization of 比爾 pronounced Bǐ ěr. But this is really how you write the name Bill in Chinese.
- 2Kyle: romanization of 凯尔 pronounced Kǎi ěr. But again this is how you write the name Kyle in Chinese.
- 3Katara: A hidden dagger held like a claw, it's the one used in assassin's creed. See wiki

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 7

"Mr Avery, this is the roof." Secretary Kyle remarked as he reached the roof with Theodore Avery. Upon opening a door, they came across the terrifying fight outside. Theodore was stunned, unable to believe the existence of regular human beings who could fight on par with Dark Sun. As Dark Sun's head surgeon, he was fully aware of the invincibility of this creation.

Kyle frowned and drew his gun. Five continuous shots reverberated as he finished off five of the terrorists, who were nothing more than sitting ducks.

Theodore turned around, looking at Kyle with incredulity.

"Oh, please don't be surprised. As head secretary for the Solaris Emperor, it is a necessity to be equipped with skills of self preservation," Kyle said calmly, "Mr Avery, even though I don't want to rush you, please finish your task quickly. The current economy is very unstable, I need to get back as soon as possible."

"In addition, due to safety reasons, it would be preferable to return to the special office." Kyle calmly watched the inhuman fight, secretly astonished. The years spent with the Solaris Emperor had not been for nothing. His face remained outwardly schooled to indifference.

Theodore Avery paused, "Do you not care about Devon Solaris?"

Kyle smiled politely, "The Solaris Emperor does not want me to care

about him."

Unbelievable... Theodore was caught between laughing and crying. but he had to quickly finish what he came here to do. He lifted an enormously long, black suitcase and shouted, "Dark Sun!"

Dark Sun had long since noticed Theodore's arrival. In his desperation to get near Dr. Avery, he was slashed twice by the relentless kidnappers.

"Put it down and leave!" Dark Sun roared.

Kyle responded immediately by whisking Theodore off the roof and then sealing the heavy door shut as per emergency protocol. At the same time, Dark Sun ran over to the black suitcase and pressed its top. Four silver lines spread outwards from the suitcase from the position of his hand. The suitcase suddenly opened along these lines with a bang. The object inside was separated into three parts: a silver rod segmented into two sections and a curved blade in the grip of deep-red skeleton claws.

Dark Sun rapidly assembled the Reaper's Scythe in two steps. He then hefted and swung the scythe in an arc, its large blade immediately blocking all the attacks.

Dark Sun jumped up and straightened. He smiled coldly while wielding the Reaper's Scythe, which stood taller than himself. His innocent yet terrifying aura made him seem like a devil in the guise of an angel.

"It's time for the hunt. Dark Sun will hunt down all who oppose gege. There will be no mercy!"

The enemies began swarming him, but Dark Sun's accurate yet rapid dance with the Reaper's Scythe created an impenetrable wall. The addition of this weapon changed Dark Sun's attacks completely. He no longer had to worry about his fine steel claws not withstanding the blows. He knew that it was almost impossible to break this scythe.

The scythe was formed from special alloy created through the very latest technology. The amount of money invested in gathering just the raw materials was unthinkable. Any attempts in gathering the same materials to create a second Reaper's Scythe would be in vain.

Naturally, the gigantic and durable blade was incredibly heavy. An average person would have difficulty in just lifting it, let alone using it as a weapon. However, this heavy scythe was best suited for Dark Sun with his strengthened muscles and skeleton. The heavy weapon, combined with his unnatural strength, multiplied his destructive potential.

His nimble and perfect movements allowed Dark Sun to brandish the Reaper's Scythe at an unbelievable speed. Only a cyborg like Dark Sun could fully exhibit the prowess of the scythe.

Its first victim was the slow moving, double headed axe wielding terrorist. The invincible and terrifying scythe sliced through not only the heavy axe, but also the terrorist's muscular body.

The terrorist's eyes nearly popped out in astonishment. Blood dripped slowly from the hefty man's forehead and he fell to his knees. A single red line slowly emerged, starting from the middle of his forehead, extending to his nose, throat and even his chest, splitting him in half. Suddenly, his

head cracked, showing glimpses of a large piece of milky-white matter with traces of blood and greasy-smelling yellow fluid. It then fell onto the floor with a splat, smashed like bean curd.

His body fell, the two halves falling in opposite directions. Various pink internal organs streaked with blood were visible. His heart could still be seen beating faintly away. Of course, since its owner was separated in two, it could only pulsate weakly a few more times before finally growing still.

"Stop!"

Enclosed within the helicopter, Devon Solaris continued his attempt to break the glass. He didn't want his little brother to kill people, to be stained with blood and most definitely didn't wish to see him carry that kind of weapon – A scythe! Oh god! What had their deceased father been thinking? He must have treated his own son as a demon, a grim reaper. Why else would he want to create such a weapon...?

However, Dark Sun didn't want to let these people off. Anyone or anything that posed a threat to his brother must be eliminated... Despite having sliced through such a massive object, the scythe did not decelerate in the slightest. The kris wielder could not react fast enough and was suddenly tossed into the air... He looked down to realize that his body had remained on the ground while only his head was airborne.

However, that was not the end. Though the hoodlum wielding the dual katara crossed them to defend himself, the Reaper's Scythe still forcibly cut through the two weapons, slicing the hoodlum's chest. But the Scythe was not long enough to pierce through his body.

"Scythe, extend!" Dark Sun made use of the microchip in his brain to command a simple device within the Scythe. The tip of the scythe suddenly extended and pierced through the hoodlum's heart, killing him instantly.

After witnessing the massacre, the remaining terrorists grew scared; thoughts of retreat formed as they took a few steps back. However, before they could escape, an ice-cold feeling cut through one of the terrorists' waist...

The morning star-wielder, who had been a little distance away, was overwhelmed with fright. He hurriedly began running towards the door.

"Reaper's Claw, release!"

As Dark Sun faced the last survivor, the red skeleton claws released its grip and the scythe's blade spiraled towards the kidnapper, nailing him to the ground. His limbs convulsed momentarily before becoming still.

"Reaper's Claw, return!"

The blade spiraled back into the air and returned to its original position with a clang, completing the Reaper's Scythe once again. Dark Sun stood quietly.

"Hunt complete!"

A sinister chill pervaded the usually bright and sunny roof of the building. It was as if the blinding rays of the sun were not enough to conquer the man standing silently amidst a pool of blood.

Belatedly, the sound of glass being pounded upon caught Dark Sun's attention. With a faint smile on his face, he turned and walked over to the helicopter. As he pulled open... no, ripped the entire door off with his slim arms, Devon Solaris sprang out.

SMACK! The crisp sound of a slap resounded across the rooftop.

"Why did you do that?!" Devon exclaimed. He seemed as if he wanted to scream out all his long-accumulated worries, regrets and discontentment. But at that moment, only the echo of his words remained.

Daren was stunned; he never thought that his gege would actually hit him...

Devon buried his face in his palms when he noticed Daren in his shredded, blood drenched clothes, holding his enormous scythe and looking like a demon that had crawled out from the depths of hell. With a choked voice he said, "Don't you understand that I don't want you to be like this? Why can't you be a normal boy? Don't let your hands be stained with blood... Don't be like... the demon father always said you were."

Daren was utterly perplexed. He had never seen gege like this. He could only pat gege's back helplessly and cautiously apologised, "Sorry, gege, Dar won't dare do this again."

Even though Devon could not accept the image of his brother committing a massacre, he never truly blamed him. He had always understood that this was not entirely didi's fault. He could only place the blame on their late father or... himself. It was he who had forced Daren's hand when he placed himself at risk!

"Promise gege that you will behave like a normal boy and not commit such terri... dangerous stunts again." Devon took a deep breath. He would absolutely never use adjectives like 'terrifying' or 'frightening' to describe his little brother. Never!

Daren looked at gege in a daze, a fearful expression on his face.

"What's wrong? Do you not want to make this promise?" Devon became anxious and shouted hastily, "Promise gege now, be a normal boy and never do such dangerous things again!"

Suddenly, explosions resounded seemingly from below, closely followed by violent tremors.

Devon was startled. He hugged didi closely, and considered carrying him to the safety of the special office, only to realize that didi was no longer a seven-year-old kid. Although he looked slim, Daren was a cyborg weighing over 90 kg. Despite exerting his full strength, Devon barely managed to lift him off the ground, much less carry him.

By then, the explosions were just underfoot.

Daren lowered his head saying, "Gege... Dar is unable to grant your

wishes. Dar is no longer a normal boy. You can order me to stop using all my abilities... but gege, all the operations that Dar has undergone will then become meaningless....."

"Dar..." Devon hesitated. He never imagined that didi would think that way.

The explosions continued to grow nearer, rending the ground asunder and sending debris flying. Devon quickly hugged his little brother, not letting any of the stray debris hurt him. Even though he knew that didi was stronger than him, and that he himself was probably the one who really needed the protection, Devon just could not leave him be, after all he was the older brother...

Devon stared blankly as massive wings suddenly extended from didi's back, and engulfed his entire body in its shadow...

"Please let Dar protect you, gege... It's not just gege who wants to protect Dar, Dar wants to protect gege too."

Devon lowered his head to look at his brother, who was shorter by half a head. The little brother who had barely reached his chest had already grown so tall...

As the building began to collapse, Daren hugged gege firmly. They did not fall despite the floor crumbling beneath their feet. Devon looked down to find his feet dangling in the air. The massive wings of steel began to beat, propelling them in the direction of the wind and towards the blue sky.

"Gege, I just realized that I no longer hate Father..."

Devon was taken aback, No longer hate Father...? He could not resist looking at Daren to verify whether his smile was forced. How could he not hate Father after so many years of inflicted torture?

Daren revealed a smile that appeared as pure as the white clouds in the sky, "Ge1, look at how pretty the sunset is!"

Devon turned to see dazzling shades of red, orange and various other colours bathing the setting sun. Unable to contain their brilliance, several stars had peeked out in the darkening sky. The residual brilliance of the setting sun juxtaposed with the night sky had a peculiar beauty, just like... the innocent yet vicious Dark Sun.

Devon trained his eyes on his little brother's face, only to see the latter's adorable and happy expression.

"Being able to protect gege is really fantastic. Ge, Dar truly thinks this way. Gege, can you stop hating Father? You see, if not for Father, we wouldn't be able to fly in the sky like this."

Daren smiled at gege while leisurely changing their direction of flight, thoroughly enjoying the caress of the evening breeze. This was the blue sky he had yearned for ever since he was young, and to be able to fly freely in it was the greatest enjoyment.

"Are you happy, Dar?" Devon suddenly asked.

Daren blinked and nodded furiously, "Yes, I'm really very happy! Today I met a good friend (Ezart shivered), fought with a strong student (Shain Baylian covered his mouth and sneezed elegantly) and most importantly, I protected gege!"

"Is that so..." Devon revealed a gentle smile and said, "then you must promise gege that you will be as happy as you are now, everyday!"

"Okay!" Daren readily replied.

The blissful silhouettes of the two brothers faded into the sky.

Devon smiled contentedly. As long as you're happy, no matter what you want to do ...

Go, do whatever pleases you.

If you want to destroy the world, I'll prepare the ammunition.

If you want to destroy me, before you kill me, call me ge one last time.

Didi, gege will no longer restrict you. I'll do my best to protect you, your freedom and let you fly freely in your own sky.

I swear to protect you, my didi; you and your freedom.

To be able to protect gege is really wonderful. Ever since I was young, it

had always been gege protecting me. Now, it's my turn to protect gege.

Originally, Dar had resented their father's antipathy in forcing torturous, drawn out operations upon him. However, he now felt truly relieved that he had accepted those operations. Those agonies had given him the strength to protect gege.

As if it was fated, Father's hatred had given him strength.

Gege, both Dar and Dark Sun were born to protect you. I swear I'll do my utmost to do so.

\*\*\*\*\* Chapter 7 END \*\*\*\*\*

Note:

1Ge: equivalent of gege, meaning brother

## Eclipse Hunter Chapter 8

"Dar, you must also be happy today."

Devon Solaris roughly ruffled didi's hair. However, upon realising the mess he had made he quickly took out a comb and began returning his brother's hair to its former neatness.

"Understood!"

"Just say okay or yeah. It's not like I'm giving you orders," Devon chided.

"Understood... Ah." Daren Solaris paused, realising his mistake. He nodded his head and changed his reply to "Yeah".

Suddenly, out of the corner of his eyes, Daren glimpsed a familiar figure... It was mainly the eye-catching head of orange-red spiky hair, combined with the tall stature and gangster-like swagger that made it impossible not to recognize the figure as Ezart.

"Ezart! Wait for me!"

In the distance, Ezart stiffened and turned around only to discover that the person calling after him was Daren. Ezart's face instantly took on a peculiar expression, as if he was seeing his most hated green chili in his lunch box.

Being half a street away, Daren was afraid that Ezart would not hear

him, so he shouted to him at the top of his lungs. The crisp and fresh morning air was particularly conducive for the transmission of sound that morning. Naturally, all the surrounding pedestrians were startled by his loud voice and glared at Daren with accusatory expressions.

That idiot... Ezart covered his face with his hand; he couldn't think of a way out of the embarrassing situation. Grudgingly, he signaled for Daren to catch up with him quickly before walking away.

Daren started to run after him, but stopped in his tracks so that he could give Devon a hug.

"Gege, see you later."

He then turned towards Theodore Avery, who had been leisurely standing next to them with a cup of coffee, and forcefully hugged him as well.

"Papa Avery, see you later."

Theodore choked on his coffee, spraying it everywhere just as Daren ran off. He watched Daren sprint away before turning towards a calm and collected Devon and giving him the look of a dead fish - *i.e.* glassy-eyed, unamused and foul.

Sure enough, Devon Solaris explained calmly, "If we are going to put on an act, we might as well act out the entire play. What would we do if someone discovers that Dar is my brother? Anyway, Dar needs a father."

"Is it too late to quit now?" Theodore Avery's asked, his mouth twitching.

Click! A BHP09 was cocked and aimed at the doctor's temple.

"What did you say?" Devon calmly asked, not even bothering to look at Theodore.

"Nothing. That gun might misfire. Be careful." Theodore seemed to have gotten used to this, continuing his drink without any changes to his facial expression.

Devon looked at the pair in the distance and asked worriedly, "Does Dar's friend seem a bit strange to you?"

"Teenagers nowadays are all like that," Theodore said, sounding as if he was fifty.

"Really?" Devon Solaris asked dubiously. He then frowned and said, "If Dar wants that weird hairstyle in future, what should I do?"

Oi! Compared to your didi's unique hairstyle, that could only be considered as normal.

Theodore wisely chose not to tell Devon that his didi's hair... was much more "exciting" than that person's "normal orange-red spiky hair".

# Character Introduction

## **Devon Solaris**

Identity: Leader of the Solaris group (the world's largest trade cartel), also known as the 'Solaris Emperor'.

Personality: An excellent brother who cherishes his younger brother.

Appearance: Mature and calm disposition with bright, golden hair and dark red eyes.

Weapon: Handgun.

Catchphrase: "Didi, you must remember to \*\*\*, do not ●●●, and you have to ○○○ but don't forget to ◎◎◎."

## **Daren Solaris**

Identity: Devon Solaris' younger brother. A cyborg - code-named 'Dark Sun'.

Personality: Split-personalities - an unnaturally innocent boy and the brutal and merciless Dark Sun.

Appearance: Cute features with silver hair and black eyes.

Weapon: Steel Claws, Reaper's Scythe, Steel Wings... and more to come.

Catchphrase: "Understood!" or "Yeah".

## **Theodore Avery**

Identity: A surgeon whose license was withdrawn. Dark Sun's head surgeon.

Personality: Obsessed with experiments and research.

Appearance: Azure hair and deep green eyes. Wears glasses.

Weapon: None.

Catchphrase: "..."

## **Ezart**

Identity: Daren's classmate. The feared head honcho of Yelan Academy.

Personality: Delinquent.

Appearance: Spiked orange hair like a porcupine. Blue eyes. Has a dragon tattoo on the left side of his face.

Weapon: Fists.

Catchphrase: "Are you an idiot?"

**Shain Baylian**

Identity: Daren’s schoolmate and heir to the second largest trade conglomerate.

Personality: Arrogant, like a spoiled prince.

Appearance: Has black hair and violet eyes. Likes to wear Chinese attire.

Weapon: Dual Sai.

Catchphrase: “We come from completely different worlds.”

\*\*\*\*\* Character Introduction END

\*\*\*\*\*

Eclipse Hunter v02c01

First Hunt – Rise of the Demon

Angelic demon, pure and corrupt,  
Take wing and fly towards the black sun,  
That barren black orb, chained to the sky.

In 2105, following the decline of nations, the world was split into hundreds of trading organisations. Motivated by the benefits, these organisations merged to form trade cartels, the largest of which was the Solaris group, controlling over 30% of the world's economy. The group was also acknowledged to have the most proficient leader in the world.

The Solaris group was never among the top five trade cartels until the leadership went to Devon Solaris, whose insatiable thirst for power lead him to continually expand his influence...

It wasn't that the growth of the Solaris group went unchallenged. The Solaris Emperor would always be one step ahead of the opposition. He was able to stop their threats before they were ever acted upon. It was as if he was able to foresee danger. Those who attempted to plot against him would find themselves easily outwitted. Everyone would lament how they got so close to defeating him, only to be defeated at the last moment.

It wasn't just once or twice; it was the same for every attempt. Everyone knew it wasn't just a coincidence, nor was it God's will. It was because the Solaris Emperor had complete control.

Every opponent who crossed his path swore to never do it again.

Everyone admitted that he had complete control over everything. No schemes nor conspiracy could escape him.

His very existence was likened to God.

He was invincible.

People called this legendary existence the 'Solaris Emperor'.

\*\*\*\*\*

Not long ago, there was an act of terrorism against the Solaris Emperor. The terrorists set up explosives in one of the five headquarters of the Solaris Federation, where the Solaris Emperor had been at the time. They had hoped to force the Solaris Emperor out in the open in order to capture him, by holding thousands of employees hostage.

Surprisingly, the infamously cold-blooded Solaris Emperor remarkably complied. The subsequent release of the thousands of hostages was proof enough that the Solaris Emperor had truly fallen into the hands of the terrorists.

Though the headquarters had ultimately been blown up, there had been no casualties as the hostages already evacuated by then.

Initially, the public had been at a loss. They had expected an inevitable

economic melt down the following day, with talks of stock market crashing, global financial crisis and similar events being all over the news. However, the next morning, under the protection of his numerous bodyguards, the Solaris Emperor himself was seen strolling around the ruins. Naturally, the rumours of an economic crisis vanished into thin air. That the Solaris emperor had dauntingly managed to survive such an ordeal unscathed, further awed the general public.

Several days later, the press, which proved to be more pervasive than the police, broadcast a short video clip. It showed a strange shadow flying up to the roof of the building where the Solaris Emperor had been captured and then flying away just as the building exploded.

Some people said that the shadow looked like a big black bird, while others seemed certain that it was a new flying vehicle invented by the Solaris Federation.

"It's a demon! I personally heard him say h-he's a demon!" a waiter of a restaurant shouted crazily.

The public generally regarded the waiter with pity. Surely there could be no demons in this world. For if a demon did indeed save the Solaris Emperor, the man who controls the world, what would that say about society in general?

Fortunately, only a select few elites could come up with enough conspiracy theories to fill a book, meaning that the lives of the general public were still considered peaceful.

At least, the city streets were peaceful. That morning two ordinary-

looking youths strolled along these streets. The only thing that seemed out of ordinary was their unique hair colour - one had orange hair while the other had silver hair.

The silver-haired boy looked especially tidy, with his neatly-parted hair and perfectly-ironed uniform. In this era, even if all elite schools were to be searched thoroughly, it would still be nearly impossible to find one such classic student.

In stark contrast, the orange-haired youth seemed rather laid-back. Even so, his intimidating height and the muscular arms peeking out of his short sleeves were warning enough that he was definitely not a person to mess with. Other than his muscles, his orange hair was impossibly spiked up towards the sky, like an angry porcupine. Furthermore, his uniform was both wrinkled and tattered. Such a classic delinquent was also near impossible to find.

Even though the sight of a nerd and a delinquent walking together was a little eye-catching, it could still be considered a part and parcel of everyday life, nothing that odd. At least, not until now...

"Ezart, Ezart... Ezart... "

"What?! Ezart, Ezart, Ezart, are you trying to call my soul back from the dead!?" Ezart snapped.

Turning back, Ezart found the nerdy youth stuck onto a polished shop window. Luckily, it was still very early so the sales clerk napping inside had not noticed. Otherwise, he would most likely have barged out of the shop to shout at them.

The dense youth gawking at the shop's display had recently become Ezart's classmate. In fact, the boy was so dense - enough to be oblivious to the dangers of this muscular classmate with spiked orange hair - that he repeatedly stuck to Ezart. Consequently, the two boys ended up with a peculiar bond. They were neither as indifferent as normal classmates nor friendly enough to be buddies.

Ezart insisted that he had become friends with Daren Avery solely due to basic human compassion. For example, if he saw a dumb dog lying in the middle of a busy road, he would be compelled to kick it out of the road to avoid it being flattened. Without him, the obedient Daren would have been beaten or extorted by their schoolmates countless times already.

"Look!" Daren turned his head. Pointing excitedly at the object in the showcase, he asked urgently, "What's that? What's that?"

Ezart frowned and turned to the showcase. Inside lay a popular handheld virtual lover game console. The package was heart-shaped and the console had a girlish pink colour. Come on, hasn't this been popular for ages? Even a three-year-old kid knows this game!

"What's that?" asked Daren again, waiting for his reply anxiously.

Ezart regarded him curiously, Did this guy come out of a mountain valley?

"That's a toy, for dating."

"Toy..." Daren turned back to look at the pink heart-shaped device, thinking of his childhood, of the toys gege had bought for him to play with; there had been a small ball, storybooks...

Ezart pulled him impatiently, "Let's go. Or else, you'll be late for classes!"

Having said that, he turned to leave. But then, Daren pointed to the showcase and said stubbornly, "I want that!"

Faint...

"That's for kids!" Ezart turned around and roared angrily, even though that was not entirely true since quite a few adults were addicted to such things. Nevertheless, for Ezart that device was equivalent to a kid's toy.

Daren immediately turned to look at Ezart. His disappointed eyes seemed to silently ask, I can't buy? I really can't buy? But I really want to buy, please let me buy! Almost like a spoiled puppy throwing a tantrum for a chew toy. Ezart face-palmed and sighed helplessly, "Whatever!"

Next, he watched indifferently as Daren eagerly entered the shop. Under the inquisitive gaze of the clerk, he rejected other suggested items and instead chose the pink heart-shaped console in the showcase. After that, he looked over at Ezart with shining, expectant eyes.

"Ezart, you take one too. We can play together," Daren decided happily. From his point of view, toys were more fun when played together with

others.

Ezart snorted, "I have no interest in that kind of stuff."

Daren was a little disappointed. Just when he thought to play with his new toy, the store clerk coldly reminded, "Excuse me. Please make the payment first. The total bill is \$25,000."

"What? \$25,000?" Hearing the price, Ezart immediately shouted, "That's a rip-off!"

At first, the clerk felt a little intimidated due to Ezart's mountain-like muscles. Then, he remembered that the security on this street was excellent. Once he pressed the alarm, the police would arrive within three minutes and so his courage returned to him once again. However, if he had known that Ezart was the God of Disaster from the renowned YeLan Academy, and did not even need thirty seconds to send him to the hospital, the clerk would have had a much different reaction

The obviously courageous clerk stuck out his hand shamelessly, "It's really \$25,000. If you're not paying, please leave or I'm calling the cops." The clerk had already poised his hand over the alarm. These two could never pay \$25,000.

Ezart gave a sneer and was about to pull Daren out of the overpriced shop when Daren spoke up.

"Can I use this?" Daren asked, pulling out a credit card and passing it to the clerk.

The clerk glanced coldly at the credit card and took the card slowly while saying, "Are you sure this card will have enough credit..."

Daren replied honestly, "I don't know really. This was given to me by gege. He said to use this to buy things. Can't I?"

Before Daren could finish, the clerk abruptly revealed what could be called the world's brightest smile. His initially cold demeanor changed abruptly as though he had just met the love of his life; his eyes turned so passionately warm that they could have melted a mountain of ice. The man nodded eagerly, "Of course! Please wait a moment while I process your payment. Would you care to look at our other products? Or perhaps you would like to peruse the latest game consoles?"

Ezart looked at the salesclerk dubiously. Is there something wrong with this guy?

Daren shook his head. Hugging the pink, heart shaped game console tightly to his chest, he repeated, "I just want this!"

"Alright. Thank you for your purchase. Please visit us again." The clerk held out Daren's card, smiling like a pimp entertaining his customers.

Daren happily fiddled with the heart shaped device - Enter name, Create a name for your lover, Set appearance - while he played, he asked, "Ezart, what name do you think would be good for my lover?"

"Xiao Ai1," Ezart replied, simply using the word that meant love.

"Oh, good. Xiao Ai..." Daren keyed in the name seriously.

"What about the hair colour?"

"Pink," Ezart continued irresponsibly.

"Eyes?"

"Pink."

"Face shape?"

"Round..."

Daren continued inputting the lover's settings. All of a sudden, the microchip in his brain gave him a warning which made him lift his head and shout, "Oh no! We're late!"

Ezart cast him a brief look and said, "Now you realise? I never thought a birdbrain as serious as you would forget about classes because of a game."

Daren glanced at his watch. Classes would begin in ten minutes but the walk to school would require at least twenty. Being late seemed inevitable.

Seeing how panicked Daren looked, Ezart rolled his eyes, "Come on, it's only being late. What's there to worry about? Everyone in the academy have been late before..."

Daren cut him off saying, "Sorry Ezart, I need to go first." He left as soon as he finished, as though he was swept away by the wind.

"Oi!"

This kid's speed is not bad at all, Ezart thought, scratching his head. Seems like he really doesn't wanna be late. But, it's already rush hour. Even if he took a cab, he would still be late.

"If you don't wanna be late, you'd better fly," Ezart joked, and continued to walk lazily.

Daren was already well aware of this. He would have to fly to reach school on time. But, it was impossible for average human beings to fly on their own. Of course, this had nothing to do with him since Daren was not an average human being in the first place. Accurately speaking, half of his body was no longer human.

After leaving Ezart's line of sight, Daren hid in the nearest alley. There, he quickly ruffled up his hair and took off his uniform to revealing a red shirt underneath. Lastly, he put on a silver visor that he had kept in his bag.

Wings of Steel, activate!

The non-human portion of Daren's body consisted of a large quantity of semi-solid metal, which was both highly malleable and sturdy. This was the main reason for him weighing 93 kilograms.

These artificial features were controlled by a similarly artificial microchip, which had been implanted in his brain. It was now emitting a warning signal reminding Daren that he was going to be late.

This microchip had perfect control over the liquid metal in his body. It drained the metal from his limbs and quickly redirected it to the pores on his back. Soon the metal began to take the form of perfectly symmetrical feathery wings. These only differed from real wings in that Daren's steel wings were hard and indestructible.

Like a movie on fast forward, more and more feathers continued to form and attach to the wing frame in layers, before finally taking shape of an enormous set of wings.

The winged Daren had planned to soar towards the sky when he suddenly remembered, "Oh right, my expression..."

He lightly slapped his cheeks and as he withdrew his hands, the eternally-curious and nerdy expression disappeared. With this change the once obedient Daren was replaced by an emotionless and cold cyborg, whose only priority was his master. He would not hesitate to transform into a demon in order to complete his missions.

His current name, was – Dark Sun!

All that the cyborg needed to do was obey his master's current orders to attend school with a serious attitude and not be late.

Even though Dark Sun's ability to fly could be used to obey this order, he had to consider another of his master's orders which specified that he must not expose his unnatural abilities to the public.

If he flew in front of Ezart, he would violate this order. However, the microchip in his brain had only calculated the time required for him to fly to school and timed the warning accordingly, forcing Daren to resort to flying anyway. If he did not fly, he would never reach school on time, but if he did fly he might expose his non-human abilities.

Since he had other means to reach school on time without flying, he had to find some way to avoid exposing his abilities.

Fortunately, his master had only wished for "Daren Solaris" to avoid exposing his non-human abilities. But for "Dark Sun"... this was a loophole that could satisfy both parties.

Daren fanned his wings slowly a few times to test them since they had not been used for quite some time. Once he confirmed that they were in good condition, Daren took a deep breath and launched his slender body into the light blue sky.

Dark Sun soared high above the earth, surrounded only by white clouds. The buildings and vehicles below seemed like tiny ants. Though he had disguised himself enough that no one would recognise him as Daren Solaris, any normal human being would be shocked to see a winged person flying about in the sky. And so he sailed even higher so

that he could stay out of sight. Not to mention, Daren truly relished the feeling of flying in the midst of the blue sky. Dark Sun did not mind indulging his other self while obeying his master's orders.

He landed lightly in an alley near the school. Luckily, there weren't many pedestrians on the streets this early, or Dark Sun would have had to land further away and be late.

He took off his visor, withdrew his wings and put on his uniform. Dark Sun was impassively straightening his uniform when he felt someone approach!

Another one of Dark Sun's abilities abruptly activated causing the fingernails on his right hand to extend three whole centimetres. Even in the dim light of the alley, it was obvious that these were no human's fingernails - normal fingernails would not glint with such a deadly metallic sheen.

A student dressed in Chinese attire caught sight of him and paused. "Oh, it's only you, Ezart's servant," he remarked with disgust.

Shain Baylian, Daren Solaris' schoolmate, thought Dark Sun as he withdrew his fingernails. Switching to Daren's nerdy expression, he timidly said, "Shain Baylian? Yes, it's me. What's the matter?"

"Nothing," Shain replied, he seemed almost too lazy to pay any attention to him. He peered further down the alley and after seeing no one else, he reluctantly turned to the nerd in front of him, "Did you see a winged... a person?" Halfway through, he abruptly changed what he was going to say. Although, he was sure he had seen a seemingly winged

person land, he had no intention of being branded a nutcase by mentioning it.

Daren gave him a dumb look as he said, "I haven't seen any birds."

"Not birds!" Shain retorted impatiently.

"Young master!"

"Young master, where are you?!"

The few cries of "young master" were accompanied by frantic footsteps. Shortly, three people appeared in the alley; two men and a woman, and they were no strangers. Dark Sun knew they were Shain's bodyguards, who had enrolled in YeLan Academy in order to attend to and protect him.

"I'm fine," Shain said, waving them off.

Just now, when he barged into the alley, had he seen that coward's face with a somewhat... sinister expression? He gazed at Daren suspiciously. Was it just an illusion caused by the alley's darkness? Or was it because a normal person is usually expressionless when alone...

"Hmph!" Shain snorted derisively. How could that ass-kisser be menacing?

With his typical arrogance, Shain looked down his nose at Daren and

said, "Tell Ezart I'll be waiting to hand him his defeat in today's practical."

"Oh, okay. I will tell him." Dark Sun nodded, not at all unhappy about being looked down upon

Dark Sun had never taken things like feelings and emotions into consideration. Even as Daren, he had not learnt to be angry when he was being looked down upon; the expression was too complex for him.

As Shain left the alley he was unable to shake off the odd feeling. Was that shadow really just a bird? he wondered. If he were anyone else, he probably would not have put much thought into it. But he knew, that there really was someone who had wings and could actually fly.

He narrowed his eyes dangerously, That guy who saved the Solaris Emperor...

He had never doubted his eyes. He must have seen a winged silhouette. But is this shadow and the guy who saved the Solaris Emperor related? Nevertheless...

While he was deep in thought, a gust of wind blew past him. Startled, Shain looked up and saw Ezart's servant running furiously towards the school gates and stepping through just a second before the bell rang.

So fast! Shain was stunned. The speed in which Daren ran... even for someone as agile as Shain, running that fast was impossible.

The mystery man who saved the Solaris Emperor, the winged shadow

who landed in the alley, Ezart's nerdy servant... could they all be related?

Shain Baylian secretly swore to uncover whatever connection bound these three - he would definitely find the truth.

\*\*\*\*\* V2C1 END \*\*\*\*\*

Note:

Ai: means love. Ezart simply took the word love and stuck the word "Xiao" onto it. So Xiao Ai means Little Love. We kept the Chinese because Little Love sounds like a western cowgirl.



## Second Hunt

Translator: Echizhen

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Gods above,

Watching silently,

Demons below,

Dictating smilingly.

Ezart slowly walked into the classroom; the teacher had already started teaching, and the class had long since descended into chaos. However, as soon as Ezart entered, all movements ceased as total silence descended.

After analyzing Ezart for a few seconds, the students decided his attitude was normal and continued their brawling while the teacher resumed his lecture. Although the classroom was strewn with broken and whole weapons, Ezart was able to find a very neat path that was void of any obstacles.

"Ezart, Ezart, you finally arrived!" There was no trace of Dark Sun in his manner as Daren waved happily at Ezart.

"You really are fast. Were you late?" Ezart casually asked.

"Nope!" Daren cheerfully replied.

"Seriously?" Ezart could not believe it. Even if he were to run at full

speed, he would probably have still been late. But he did not bother pursuing the matter.

"There's something I wanted to tell you! I met Shain Baylian and his three friends."

Ezart gave a cold laugh, "Those three servants? What? Did you get yourself beaten up?"

"No." Daren shook his head, "He wanted me to pass on a message to you."

"Ah?" Ezart pulled out his chair and lazily sat down.

"He said to tell you that he'll be waiting to hand you your defeat in today's practical." Daren passed on the exact message, without adding any embellishments.

The battle simulator, the most famous aspect of YeLan Academy, did not look much different from a gigantic stadium from the outside. However, the inside revealed the simulations of a tropical rain forest, the ruins of a town, and even the replica of a real city. Every student who entered had only one mission--to survive and kill the rest. Of course, any destruction within the simulator was purely virtual, meaning no one would really die. Otherwise, the academy would be left with only a handful of students.

"Hmph!" Ezart laughed coldly and angrily delivered a heavy punch to the table. The hard wooden table immediately shattered to pieces.

Ezart, whose amazing strength classified him as YeLan academy's god of disaster, just had to cross paths with the highly agile Shain Baylian, whose martial arts were inherited from a long standing aristocratic family. Although he did not have Ezart's bizarre strength, which could probably knock him out with a single punch, his snake-like contortions made certain that Ezart would be unable to even touch the hem of his clothes.

Brute force was useless if he couldn't land a hit!

That was the reason Ezart had never won in a fight against Shain. Normally, he would not mind this since fighting with strong opponents was his favourite pas-time. The existence of an undefeatable opponent would only fuel his fighting spirit. However, regardless his fighting abilities, Shain just happened to be the type of person Ezart hated the most.

A rich peacock who was haughty and arrogant. If his arrogance had been due to his fighting abilities, Ezart would not have minded. But Shain was the type to brag about being the heir to the second largest trade cartel, Lunar Federation.

Perhaps it was a slight exaggeration to say that it was the second largest trade cartel. In actual fact, other than the absolute power of the Solaris Federation, it was very hard for the rest of the organizations to claim second place. However, it was still an established fact that the Lunar Federation was very powerful.

"When is the practical?" Ezart asked coldly

"Third and fourth period," Daren replied without hesitation,

"Good! Then I'll sleep first so that I'll have enough energy to fight with that garbage." But just as he was planning to lay his head on his table and sleep, he remembered that he had smashed his table into a pile of wood. He casually signaled to a nearby classmate and said bluntly, "Oi! Give me your table."

How could the boy refuse him? His only option was to clear the table quickly and carry it to Ezart. He then carefully put the table down, afraid that its angle might be incorrect and disturb Ezart's sleep.

Before he had finished adjusting the table, Ezart waved him off and immediately laid his head on the table. However, he quickly raised his head again to glare at the nearby Daren, and warned, "Don't disturb my sleep! You got that? Or I'll beat you up!"

Daren loved attending classes in a serious manner and reminding people to follow his example. Due to this, he had a record of repeatedly waking Ezart up from his dreamland.

"Okay." Daren nodded obediently. He still wished for Ezart to take the lessons seriously, however, after so many failures, he just was not as committed as he had been. Besides, he really did not want to get beaten up.

Satisfied with Daren's response, Ezart went back to sleep. Meanwhile, Daren the obedient nerd began taking out his pencil case in order to take down the relevant notes. But as he opened his bag, he noticed the virtual lover game console, the toy which he had just purchased. Consequently,

he became distracted by the pink, heart-shaped device...

No, classes must be taken seriously. I can't play games. Daren warned himself sternly. Then he quickly took out his pencil case and zipped up his bag to avoid looking at the console.

In 2055, all the states collapsed... the world was thrown into chaos and everyone started fighting each other...

If I ignore her, will Xiao Ai be angry?

In 2075, the trade cartels formed... divided the global regimes...

Oh no! I don't think I gave Xiao Ai food. Will she die from hunger?

In 2099, the Solaris Federation officially became one of the world's largest trade cartels, holding a thirty percent share of the entire economy...

I really want take a peek at what Xiao Ai is doing! Just a little peek shouldn't matter, right? Anyway, I don't need to look at the notebook to remember notes... I can peek while studying!

Finally, he found a method that would satisfy both arguments. Well, in reality, that was just an excuse. Daren used his right hand to take out the console, while using his left hand to take down notes. With the help of the microchip in his brain, multitasking was no problem at all.

Having set the console down on the table, he switched it on. The heart-shaped console projected a virtual girl with human proportions, though only her head and shoulders could be seen. With her round face, pink eyes and pink hair, she could be described as cute, rather than beautiful.

"Good morning, Dar," greeted the virtual girl cheerfully. Wanting his lover to call him 'Dar', he had purposefully chosen to use this as his username.

Seeing the girl again, Daren excitedly replied, "Good morning, Xiao Ai."

Then, an option appeared on the heart-shaped touchscreen:

What would you like to do with Xiao Ai now?

1. Chat

## **2. Have a meal**

3. Watch television...

Daren considered for a moment before choosing 1. Chat. Xiao Ai immediately started talking, "Dar, what are you doing now?"

"I'm having lessons!"

"Is having lessons fun?" The algorithm generated a list of suitable answers and Xiao Ai randomly chose one of them to answer.

"No, it's not," Daren replied honestly.

In all honesty, the microchip in his brain held a lot of knowledge, though a large part of it was technical. For example, information on operating all sorts of vehicles (from automobiles to aeroplanes), all known poisons in the world (how to differentiate and neutralize each), even human anatomy (all the various weaknesses in the human body, which part to attack in order to kill a person instantly ), et cetera...

The huge amount of knowledge in the microchip made the lessons a little boring. Even if the teacher was teaching something that was not on the microchip, Daren only had to listen to it once and it would automatically be recorded in the microchip. In fact, with a memory like Daren's, the only reason he took down notes was due to an analysis from the microchip. Apparently, this was something students should do in class, and lending classmates notes would improve Daren's relationship with them.

But so far no student had asked to borrow notes from him. Daren had tried to lend them to Ezart but Ezart returned the favor by giving him lots of disdainful looks for free and as a bonus, he had once given Daren a lecture on how "Nobody Listens to War History Lessons - Only Practical Lessons are Real Lessons".

Therefore, with all these factors added up, Daren did not understand the real meaning behind classes. To Daren, the classes appeared to be nothing more than note taking practice.

"If it's not fun, why are you still attending?" As she was programmed, Xiao Ai expressed her confusion perfectly and came up with a standard response.

"Because gege wants me to," Daren answered naturally.

"So, Dar has a brother..."

"Hey! Look that kid's playing virtual lover!" A nearby classmate exclaimed, as if he'd discovered a new piece of land.

"Impossible! That nerd? Wasn't he extremely into studying?" a nearby girl with multicolored hair giggled.

Daren could heard these comments too. He lifted his head from the game console to look at students who'd been speaking. He determined that they were all talking about him.

He was a little excited. No one other than Ezart had ever paid any attention to him in class.

"Do you want to play together?" Daren asked cheerfully.

Even though it could be said that asking classmates to play game consoles during class was an inappropriate action, during the past few days Daren had realized that he shouldn't rely on his microchip so much.

Considering the chaos in this class, if there happens to be a day when the entire class "obediently" plays games and avoids their usual activities (fighting, throwing tables and chairs, gambling, trafficking all sorts of weapons and bargaining the prices loudly), the teacher would probably

be so touched that he would give the entire class a huge merit.

The lowest class in a fighting academy could not be judged with common sense.

"Hahahaha... idiot, who'd wanna play a little kid's game!" The male students mocked loudly.

"And play together he says! So childish," said the girl with multicoloured hair, as she raised her hand to display her blood-red nail polish and pretended to pout maturely.

"If it was a real, tall and beautiful woman, I wouldn't mind playing with you."

Having said that, few of the male students laughed lewdly.

"Hey! Do you want to die? That kid is under Ezart's... is under his protection!" One of the students fearfully reminded. Halfway through, he was even worried that mentioning Ezart's name might wake him up and quickly changed his words.

Immediately, a few students fell silent and shot frightened glances in Ezart's direction. Reassured by his snoring, they allowed themselves to relaxed a little.

"I just can't understand why he wants to protect such a wimp." "Must be because he's funny." "That's true. He really is a joke. In this day and age, who would dress like that! So nerdy!"

They continued to speak scornfully about Daren until they felt better.

"Oi! What if he tattles to Ezart?" One of them suddenly asked worriedly. He practically whispered, when he reached the word "Ezart".

"Impossible. Ezart wouldn't care about him."

Despite saying that, the speaker himself was not quite certain. Although Ezart was the YeLan Academy's god of disaster and could be considered to be their leader, he had never protected anyone nor formed a gang before. Just the idea that he had taken Daren under his wing had stunned everyone.

More people looked depressed. They glanced at one another, unsure of what to do. They did not dare threaten Daren, especially not when Ezart was right next to them!

Meanwhile, Daren had only understood half of the insults. To him, slang such as "wimp" or "nerdy" were very strange, so he could not understand them. Instead, when they criticized his clothes, he asked softly, "Are my clothes ugly?"

But, these clothes were chosen by gege and gege was very satisfied with them. Gege loved him so much that it was impossible that he would let him wear ugly clothes. Daren could not even comprehend how much his gege loved him.

However, he missed out a few points. His gege was exactly ten years

older than him and had an overly mature personality. In addition, he treated his didi like a a helpless child. These factors combined made Devon dress his didi like a nerd, something that teenagers truly hated this day and age.

By this time, the bullies' one-sided conflict with Daren had already attracted the attention of the teacher as well as the entire class. While the teacher was worrying about the lives of the students and his own responsibilities, the rest of the class was watching the situation unfold like a movie put on for their entertainment.

Most of the students were looking at the bullies, wondering whether they were planning to laugh at Daren's latest question or compliment him, so as to avoid clashing with Daren's protector, Ezart.

Since the whole class was watching them, none of the bullies could back down even if they wanted to. Otherwise, the title of "wimp" would most likely be used against them.

The male students exchanged hesitant looks; none were brave enough to continue making fun of Daren but they were reluctant to be branded a wimp at the same time. Luckily, the girl with multicoloured hair spoke up.

"Ugly to the max!" she exclaimed, while looking around the class arrogantly, as if she'd accomplished a great deed.

However, the class was not impressed. Everyone knew that while Ezart was definitely not a gentleman, he still disliked hitting women. In fact, his tolerance level was much higher for the female students than the male ones.

Having received such a straightforward answer, Daren was stunned. Although the microchip's immediate analysis was for him to humbly accept his classmates' criticism and express his willingness to improve, his heart disagreed with the analysis since he felt that his classmates were not being sincere.

He fell silent for some time until even the "brave" girl became nervous. Finally, Daren replied with the perfect microchip-suggested answer, "Sorry, I will improve in future. Thank you for your comment."

The bystanders were stunned. Surely normal human beings would never reply like this after being made fun of so harshly. But it just seemed so reasonable coming from a nerd like Daren.

"Wimp!"

The audience, realizing that they were not going to get a good show, expressed their disappointment by insulting Daren.

Combining the situation and the usage of the phrase, Daren finally started to understand what "wimp" really meant. They probably thought that he was cowardly.

"What? Unhappy? It's rare to see you so quiet."

Ezart was quite pleased; he had not heard a single stupid question from Daren since morning. Those questions had often led him to suspect that Daren had come out of a rock in the mountains and so lacked common

sense.

Unhappy? Daren felt restless, but he did not have the time to consider such intangible feelings. He needed to think about the problems with his social interactions - why he just could not make any friends, why he could not click with his classmates... Perhaps it was because of his clothes.

But the clothes chosen by gege could never have anything wrong with them; gege loved him and would only provide the best for him.

Then is it my own appearance? Daren pondered. Was it because he was ugly? But gege always said he was very cute... but, even if he were ugly, gege would still call him cute! After all, gege loved him too much.

"Ezart, do you think I'm good-looking?" Daren asked as seriously as he could.

"Eh?" Ezart asked, baffled. The nerd before him seemed to have some real problems with his brain otherwise he would not be asking such a question. The strangest thing was that he had actually chosen to ask Ezart of all people. Could he not tell from Ezart's tattered clothes that he had never cared about appearances?

"Tell me the truth, am I very ugly?" Daren persisted.

Ezart measured him from head to toe and scratched his head, "I don't really understand how girls judge beauty nowadays. You are a bit skinny, but not ugly. Your face is not too bad; it's just the black-rimmed specs are a bit strange." Ezart assumed that Dar must have fallen for a girl for him

to ask this kind of question.

The spectacles are strange? Daren took off his glasses and immediately asked, "How about now?"

Ezart was astounded. This was the first time he had seen Daren without glasses. Without that old-fashioned black-rimmed pair of spectacles, Daren looked much more normal... at least, he no longer looked like he was living in the past.

"Much more normal. I think it'd be better if you stopped wearing those specs." Ezart said bluntly.

"Really? Then I won't wear them in the future." Daren was very happy. He thought he had discovered the root of the problem, So it was the glasses that didn't suit me! Even though they were chosen by gege, he himself doesn't wear glasses meaning he doesn't know how to choose!

"Won't wear it? Then how about your short-sightedness? Can you see?" Ezart asked without really caring.

"Yeah I can see." Daren nodded. Actually he had never been short-sighted in the first place. Being a cyborg, it was impossible for him to be short-sighted.

"That's good; you stay outside and buy lunch for me." Ezart said as he raised his head to look at the gigantic battle simulator with an excited pre-battle grin. Shain Baylian specially challenged him today and although Ezart hated him as a person, he always looked forward to

fighting him.

"Okay." Daren nodded.

"Hope that Dark Sun comes too," Ezart mumbled excitedly. He then carelessly tossed his own bag to Daren and went ahead into the battle simulator.

Since the microchip prioritised the protection of Daren's master, it was important for Daren to become stronger. Therefore, Daren had gone into the battle simulator as Dark Sun before to face strong fighters in order to improve his fighting abilities.

Back then, he had fought Shain Baylian and witnessed Ezart's fighting style. Later, he found out from Ezart that the two of them were considered the top fighters in the entire academy, not counting the students in the mysterious Elite Combat Section.

"It's too bad the students in the ECS never use the battle simulator," Ezart had said.

Therefore, the reason to go into the battle simulator was gone. Logically, Daren would no longer need to enter the battle simulator as Dark Sun... but, Ezart had kept on mumbling about his desire to fight with Dark Sun.

Daren hesitated. Even though he wished to fulfill Ezart's desire, he was worried that his identity might be exposed. If he continued entering the battle simulator as a skilled fighter, he might attract the Academy's

attention. Then the order for "Daren Solaris" to hide his abilities from the public might end up becoming even more difficult to accomplish.

Friend's desire versus Master's order. After a moment of inner struggle, Daren looked at Ezart's back apologetically. He just could not go against his master's orders simply for the sake of a friend's desire.

Sorry, Ezart. Next time, I will fight with you as Dark Sun, Daren muttered to himself.

Since I'm not going in, I might as well go to the canteen and wait. Play with Xiao Ai and have lunch at the same time!

Daren was satisfied with his plan, and with a bag on each shoulder, he walked towards the canteen.

"Hold on!"

Daren continued walking towards the canteen. Because he could not wait to play with Xiao Ai, his face was flushed with excitement and he walked lightly as if he was flying.

"Can't you hear that I asked you to stop?"

Oh yeah, should I buy the same console for gege on the way home so we can play together? Daren considered seriously, But gege is so old, will he still like toys?

"Hey! Are you ignoring me on purpose?!"

A girl's furious voice sliced through the air. At the same time, Daren felt an object flying towards his shoulder. Reflexively, he avoided the object, turned around and moved a few steps back. With just one move, he had managed to distance himself and turn to face the object in question.

However, what Daren was facing was an impressed girl with her right hand positioned to attack. She was quite pretty. She had pink hair cut in a neat short style and her red eyes were very lively. Overall, she made a good first impression.

"Nice moves!"

There were two guys beside the girl. One of them had red hair and blue eyes. His smile was so brilliant that the sun would lose color if both were to stand side-by-side. The compliment just now had come from him.

The other guy was the exact opposite. His light green hair coupled with silver eyes were enough to make anyone feel a chill. However, he did not seem content to simply rely on his features. His mirthless expression seemed cold enough to make people wonder if his face was an ice sculpture.

"Eli, he wasn't bad, right?" the guy with the brilliant smile asked his partner excitedly, as if he didn't see his partner's icy expression.

The emotionless guy called Eli, moved his lips slightly. "Not bad."

"Wow! For Eli to give a compliment, that really is pretty good," the bright youth exclaimed.

"Stupid Elian, that's not the point!" The girl turned around and scolded furiously, before continuing, "The point is that he made me call him three times in a row and ignored me!"

"That's really bad, how can you make our Princess Eloise call you three times in a row?" Elian sighed and shook his head dramatically.

Daren, forever curious, immediately asked, "Why do you call her princess?"

It had been a long time since the world was divided into countries; only trade groups existed now. Designations, such as Princess, could only be found in history textbooks. Of course, the owners of the top trade federations were not very different from royal families of the past. In fact, they tended to be more luxurious than royalty. Nevertheless, a normal person would still not call them princess, prince or any other honorifics.

"Eloise is ECS' only girl! Of course, she's our princess," Elian replied amiably.

"Oh..." Daren said, as if he understood.

If the person he asked had been Ezart, he would have continued asking, "Why must the only girl be called Princess? A princess supposed to be the daughter of a king, right?"

But after attending class these past few days, Daren had realised that his questions were common knowledge. Therefore, asking would only raise suspicion and people might start wondering about his origins. So he decided to leave it be.

Wait a minute! Just now... did they say ECS?! Daren suddenly raise his head and asked, "You are students from ECS?"

Hearing that, Elian seemed to regret his choice of words. However, throughout the exchange his behaviour had been exaggerated, so Daren could not tell if he was genuinely regretful or just putting on a show.

"You can't tell the others," pleaded Elian with his palms together as if he was begging for his life.

"But..."

Daren looked around. Just now, Elian's loud declaration that he was in ECS and Daren's equally loud reply had attracted a lot of attention. Quite a few students around them had stopped their tracks with expressions of suspicion or disbelief. Whether Daren spread it around or not seemed meaningless.

"Please!" pleaded Elian, looking even more pitiful.

"Elian!" Eloise suddenly shouted, as she grabbed Elian and threw him into the air like a pillow. She then put her hands on her hips and roared, "Don't you dare bully him! I saw him first!"

Elian landed on his butt, looking miserable as his handsome face contorted with pain. Yet Eloise held no sympathy for his pains.

Having received such a warning, Elian could only hide his pitiful expression. As he stood up, he rubbed his butt and muttered, "It's better to be bullied by me than to be liked by you."

Throwing a tall guy up into the air so casually... such freakish strength might be on par with Ezart's.

Eloise heard his mumblings and rewarded him with a glare. The latter quickly said, "Okay, okay, Princess. Quickly finish flirting with your pretty boy. If we continue like this, we won't be able to complete the principal's mission."

Principal's mission? Daren tilted his head to think, and then remembered what Ezart had previously said. All students in the ECS were so strong that they didn't need to attend battle classes. Therefore, they only needed to complete a certain number of missions for the principal to graduate.

"See, he looks so cute when he's lost in his thoughts!" Eloise stepped towards Daren and stared at him, mesmerised.

"Honestly, I think Eli and I are better-looking. He's obviously still a kid..." Elian mumbled, rolling his eyes disapprovingly. But on second thought, he realised that if a woman, who could throw him into the air so casually, had confessed her love for him... Elian shivered and decided to just quietly watch others' suffer.

"Hey. Hey, will you be my boyfriend?" Eloise asked bluntly.

"No!" Daren declined just as bluntly.

"Why? Am I not pretty enough?" Eloise shouted.

Hahaha! This is not the first time the Princess was rejected, but this is the first time someone declined so tactlessly! Elian held Eli's arm and laughed, though the latter totally ignored him.

"I already have Xiao Ai," Daren answered honestly.

"What!" Eloise was shaken. Her shoulders drooped in disappointment as she turned to Eli and Elian and sighed, "So he already has a girlfriend..."

"This is my Xiao Ai."

Daren took out his virtual lover console from his bag and happily introduced Xiao Ai to his new friends. Since they exchanged more than three sentences, they must be his friends! Well, at least according to Daren's definition of friends.

Elian, Eloise and even the icy Eli could not help but glance at the virtual console. Then a strange look emerged in their eyes.

"Princess, Your Highness! You... actually lost to a virtual lover. This, this really..." cried Elian dramatically and then laughed uncontrollably, "This

really sets a new record for 'Reasons to Dump People'!"

Eloise reddened, her face reflecting her embarrassment and anger. She glared at Daren ferociously and roared, "Are you trying to be funny?"

By this time, Daren had already ignored all warnings about not asking stupid questions and asked, confused, "What do you mean by trying to be funny?"

Eloise's eyes widened at his reply. She could not tell from his expression if this was intentional or if Daren was really ignorant. However, just as Ezart had once thought, this guy seem to have "I am nerdy, what can you do about it?" written all over his face. He was so nerdy that people had no idea what to do with him.

"Did this kid... come out from under a rock?" Elian muttered, oblivious to the fact that his guess had been exactly the same as Ezart's.

Eloise could not fight a pretty boy she liked, even if she was furious enough to spit fire. And when the said boy gave off such a nerdy look... How can anyone be so cute with such a nerdy look!? Eloise had to practically force herself from rushing to give the nerdy pretty-boy a "big-sister hug" to console him...

Daren, seemingly sensing the danger, was retreating slowly...

"Hmm, looks like the Princess doesn't want to go into the battle simulator. Eli, how about just the two of us go in? After all, the target might not turn up," Elian suggested to his partner.

"Princess! We'll go in first, okay?" Elian shouted, not forgetting to wave at Eloise.

"What!?" Eloise turned around, looking like she was ready to eat somebody.

Elian, scared by her reaction, quickly stuttered, "Since you want to bug... no, console! Console that pretty boy, the two of us will go on ahead into the battle simulator to find the target. We can't just ignore a mission given by the principal..."

Hearing that, Eloise seemed to have an internal struggle as she kept throwing glances at Daren but looking unwilling to let Eli and Elian leave. Finally she decided, "No! I must go in!"

"I didn't know you could be so professional..." Elain muttered.

"There's hearsay that the target is a handsome man," the ever-silent Eli remarked coldly.

So that's how it is... realisation dawned on Elian. It seems a pretty boy can't win against the charm of a handsome man.

"What rubbish! I-I heard that the target is very strong, so..." Eloise trailed off; it seemed as if she could not even convince herself.

"Alright, alright." Elian rolled his eyes and turned towards Daren to ask,

"Hey kid, which class are you in?"

Though he had no idea of Daren's actual age, the cuteness, the virtual game console and the shy behavior were more than enough for Elian to treat him like a little kid.

"Class D," replied Daren truthfully

"Hmm." He turned around to look at Eloise again. "How about this? We go in first to find your handsome man, then you go to Class D later to look for your pretty boy."

"Lian! I love you to death!" Eloise exclaimed, so moved that she called Elian by his nickname.

"Yes, yes! Princess Your Highness, Master Iceman, let's go. If we don't enter the simulator now, it's going to be lunchtime." Elian pulled the two in the direction of the simulator. But after just two steps, he turned his head and shouted to Daren, "Kid, don't forget to cheer for us outside!"

"Are you planning to fight?" Eli asked, finally showing a reaction.

Elia explained as he walked, "We've waited for the target for so many days with no results. We should fight a bit and maybe the target will show himself..."

As Daren watched the three enter the simulator, an intelligent yet cold light emerged in his eyes. This was Dark Sun.

Three strong fighters... especially that playful Elia - he is the strongest!

Daren... or should we say "Dark Sun" contemplated for a while and then left quickly and silently.

An extraordinary crowd gathered at the plaza in front of the stadium-sized battle simulator. Rumours had already spread throughout the entire school, and even most of the faculties knew. Naturally, all of them had come to the plaza to watch. The place had become so crowded that even a slight movement could crush someone.

All this happened for a single reason - students from ECS would be joining the battle!

Now the audience switched from debating whether Ezart would defeat Shain this time, to whether Ezart and Shain had the ability to stand on the same level as the ECS students.

A large portion of the audience was confident of the ability of these two students. But there were some who were not so sure. After all, ECS was practically a legend. They were close to being classified as non-human... Then again, Ezart's strength and Shain's snake-like contortions were not very human either.

Someone was walking silently in the midst of the chaotic plaza. The entrance to the battle simulator had long ago been blocked by the crowd. Of course, nobody wished to enter. Instead, they were standing around waiting for the losers to come out so that they could get the first-hand account of what it was like to be killed by the ECS.

Seeing this situation, the person judged that the conventional route was inaccessible. He took a step back and leapt over the crowd towards the door. Obviously, his landing places were the audience's shoulders or heads.

"Who!" "Who stepped on my head!" "My face! It's ruined..."

Though everyone was looking for the perpetrator, they could only catch the glimpse of an elegant back wearing a red shirt, jeans and boots.

"Who's that? I'll kill him!" Those who had gotten trampled began swearing.

Stepping into the battle simulator for the second time, Dark Sun was not as unprepared as the time he had entered as Daren. He was already dressed as Dark Sun, with his silver visor and emotionless expression.

The same cheeky old man appeared on the gigantic screen.

"Hello young man, I'm Antonius, YeLan Academy's principal. Welcome to the battle simulator designed for self-training. Please enter your username and password."

"Username: Dark Sun, password: XXXX." replied Dark Sun in a monotonous voice.

"Choose your equipment."

"2 daggers, 1 set of throwing knives and 1 handgun." Dark Sun decided to be more cautious this time; the three from the ECS did not seem to be ordinary fighters.

When the virtual equipment appeared in front of Dark Sun, he quickly placed a dagger in his boot, the throwing knives at his waist, the handgun in the holster on his left thigh and finally held the remaining dagger in his right hand.

"I hope you have a good fight. Heh heh." With his usual playful smile, Antonius watched his student walk slowly into the midst of battle.

To maintain fairness, when students entered the simulator, they would be placed at random locations in the battlefield. Currently, Dark Sun found himself in the middle of a lush, tropical rainforest.

First, defeat Ezart. Next, fight those three. Dark Sun was fairly certain that he was their target, though he was not sure why.

Regardless, he knew that they would not leave the battle simulator until they had accomplished their mission. Therefore, Dark Sun was in no hurry to look for them and since he had already entered, he might as well fulfill Ezart's wish first.

Within the rainforest, Dark Sun could fully utilise the dense trees for camouflage. He snuck past a few people, who were totally unaware of his presence. The microchip could accurately analyze the virtual environment to calculate Ezart's exact location.

However, before he could find him, Dark Sun detected another familiar presence - Eloise.

She looked almost the same as before, wearing her casual clothing but with one major difference: the pair of giant maces she held in her hands. The hammers seemed to be antiques, which appeared to be so heavy that it would require a cart to move them. However, Eloise carried them in a very casual manner; her relaxed posture served to warn others that these two hammers were not just accessories in her hands.

She walked alone in the forest, with no intention of hiding. She even nonchalantly cleared all the obstacles that got in her way. There was a faint homicidal aura around her, revealing her desire to kill everything that stood against her, be it gods and demons.

"Is he even going to show up? We've been in here so many times and I just had to land in this stupid rainforest again!" she seemed to grumble to no one in particular as she stomped onwards.

Dark Sun did not truly believe there was no one beside her. After all, there was no sign of Elian and Eli, and yet Eloise did not appear to be talking to herself.

Dark Sun scanned for clues around Eloise but to no avail, which made him ever more wary.

"Shut up!" A very masculine voice called out.

"Eli, don't think that just because I can't see you, I can't touch you! If you make me angry, I will destroy every one of these trees. Then you won't be able to hide!" cried Eloise's, her eyes widening in anger.

"Be quiet, there's someone else here!" came Eli's annoyed voice.

This time Eloise kept her mouth shut. She knew that Eli would not have said this without a reason. She squinted her large eyes, searching hard for the elusive person.

Even though Dark Sun had confirmed that Eli was nearby, he had not discovered his whereabouts even with the help of his microchip, and yet Eli had detected Dark Sun already.

Dark Sun yearned to find out whether they would be able to locate him. He needed to find the flaws that would allow them to pinpoint his location so he could improve upon them for the sake of carrying out his master's orders.

Therefore, he waited silently.

"Eli? Have you found him yet?" Eloise asked restlessly. Usually, Eli would tell her the enemies' whereabouts quickly so that she could send them flying.

There was long silence before Eli's monotonous voice resounded, "I can't find him... Looks like we've found our target."

"Even you can't find him?" Eloise was stunned, But Eli has "that" ability!

"Maybe there really isn't anybody there?"

"No, there is. I feel it. But it's weak." Eli countered immediately.

Eloise mumbled, "Okay, okay. I trust you."

Feel it? But it's weak? Dark Sun immediately began analyzing. Eli obviously had no way to determine his exact location, but how was he so certain that someone was nearby?

Maybe it's not a common occurrence. Dark Sun started to realize. Then, should I challenge them, or should I follow the original plan and find Ezart first?

"Eloise," Eli began, appearing out of nowhere. "Destroy this place."

Eloise shrugged. "Sure! I was getting bored anyway."

She then lifted the giant maces in her hands and started destroying everything around her. In the face of her terrifying power, fully-grown trees were no different from weeds smashed with a single blow. There were a few times when Eli was nearly hit but somehow he managed to dodge them all.

Although Dark Sun was uncertain whether she was stronger than Ezart, it was definitely more of a shock to see a pretty girl wielding that kind of massive strength compared to a muscular guy...

Leading her to duel Ezart should be interesting... Dark Sun, no, this time it was Daren who could not resist his childish temptation.

Eli's eyes suddenly widened as he cried out, "I felt it! It's over there!"

It was obvious that these two understood each other well. Even as Eli finished speaking, Eloise's maces were swinging in the direction he had glanced.

A human shadow leaped out from among the debris of leaves and branches. It was almost like he was taunting them; the moment he landed, he intentionally placed his foot on top of Eloise's hammer.

"Handsome!" Eloise almost greedily looked at Dark Sun's slender figure. Although she could not see his whole face, just the chin and the thin lips were enough to explain everything.

"It counts even if you can't see the face?" Eli mocked coolly, while taking out a small flare. He shot it up into the air and a beautiful fire flower exploded in the sky.

Eloise hefted her maces to bash the handsome man, while retorting, "Ugh! You men don't understand! The clips from his last fight, his beautiful moves, his cool stance... there's no way he can be anything but super attractive under that visor!"

Eli snorted. He was not interested in prejudices that could not be proven scientifically. He reached into his clothes and produced ten

uniquely-designed darts. Each dart consisted of a five-centimeter fullered blade and a ring at the hilt, just big enough to insert a finger.

"Hey! Hey! Ten darts? Are you aiming to kill?" Eloise's eyes widened. Their mission was not to defeat Dark Sun!

Eli refuted this in his usual manner, "I suspect these darts won't be enough to stall him till Elian arrives."

Eloise blinked, thinking that Eli was exaggerating. Although Dark Sun had shown abnormal strength in those dueling clips, it didn't matter since it was impossible to take on both Eli and her together!

So far the two had not stopped their bickering, but Eloise's attacks had not stopped either. The two giant maces was constantly howling through the air.

Dark Sun was casually dodging; she could not even match Shain's speed. He firmly believed that if he really wanted, he could defeat her without too much trouble.

However, she was very similar to Ezart. Instead of fighting with Eloise, he might as well duel him. That way, he could kill two birds with one stone.

Eloise felt increasingly uneasy as the fight went on and she repeatedly glanced back at Eli. If not for Dark Sun's utter lack of desire to fight her and his anticipation for Eli to join the battle, it was highly likely that she would have lost a long time ago.

But, Eli had yet to make a move...

"Eli!" Eloise yelled, finally losing her patience, "Why aren't you using it to help me!"

Eli pursed his lips, his face seemed paler than usual, "Can't feel it..."

"What?" Eloise was taken aback.

"I can't feel what he's thinking or where his next move will come from. I can't sense anything." Eli said, his voice trembling slightly.

Eloise was dumbfounded, "Impossible! Did you lose your powers?"

"No, I can tell what you're thinking, and I can also sense the thoughts of the people spying on us." As he spoke, Eli scanned the bushes. The ones hiding in them shuddered in unison, unsure whether to continue or leave and miss such a rare fight.

"It's only him that I can't sense," Eli remarked, his gaze returning to Dark Sun once again.

"Other than natural reflexes, all actions must require some thought before their execution, no matter how short the thought process is..."

This was their usual fighting style. Eloise would fight at the front-line, while Eli stood at the sidelines, predicting the enemy's incoming attacks

for her. Sometimes, he would even use his darts to actively attack their opponent. For a mind-reader, learning his opponents' weaknesses and exploiting them were his most terrifying abilities.

"But, he doesn't think at all. It's like all of his movements are natural reflexes." Eli barely managed to suppress the anxiety in his voice, "But that's impossible... only animals are like that."

Eloise was already at a loss; they had never been in this kind of situation before and she was unsure of what to do. From the clips she had seen, she knew of Dark Sun's prowess. If Eli could not help her, she most definitely could not prevent Dark Sun from leaving.

In comparison to the shock the other two were in, Dark Sun was analyzing the situation. Mind-reading, a skill that was useless against him, was also a psychic ability that could not be duplicated by the latest technology.

He had not predicted that both Eloise and Eli's abilities would prove useless against him. Dark Sun's face showed no sign of his disappointment, but he did not want to continue wasting his time with them either. Let's find Ezart!

Having made his decision, Dark Sun sped away from the one-sided duel like an arrow to resume his search for Ezart.

Dark Sun's inhuman speed did not even give Eloise a chance to try to stop him. She felt extremely flustered. After their long search, they had finally found their target and now their efforts were going down the drain.

She yelled at her companion angrily, "He escaped! Now what?!"

"I read it..." Eli replied unexpectedly.

"What?"

"Ezart..."



## Third Hunt

Translator: Aoi

Proofreaders: Blah, Wolfjackle, Wryn, Noobzilla, Doomsdayvic

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They say when there's no god

The Devil smiles,

They say when there's no demon

God sneers.

Daren Solaris rushed into the cafeteria and was about to join the lunch queue when...

"Idiot, over here!" Daren turned and saw Ezart nonchalantly chewing on a piece of bread.

As usual he was sitting by himself. Ezart had long since discovered that Daren was nowhere in the cafeteria and so had already purchased two large plates of food for him.

Shoot... thought Daren as he, somewhat anxiously, went over to sit with Ezart.

"What were you doing?!" As expected, he got scolded the moment he sat down.

"I tell you to get lunch first, and instead you get here later than me!"

Even though Ezart sounded angry, his expression said otherwise. In fact, he looked as if he was in a pretty good mood. Strange. Daren had overheard that Ezart and Shain Baylian had lost their battle against Elian from the ECS, two to one.

Thereafter, Dark Sun had been unable to find him since Ezart had already been killed and thus ejected from the simulator. Once the game time had expired, Dark Sun had hastily put on Daren's uniform and dashed over to the cafeteria.

"Are you in a good mood?" Daren asked cautiously.

"Of course!" Ezart exclaimed as he slapped the table with an exhilarated smile on his face, "Guess who I met in the simulator? A student from the ECS!"

"Was he good?" This question was asked by Dark Sun, whose cold demeanor remained hidden by the thick glasses.

"Good? Let me tell you, there is only one word that can describe him: Strong! Super strong!" Ezart laughed loudly.

A strong fighter! Dark Sun began to develop a desire to fight Elian. He then remembered that Eli and Eloise were also considered strong fighters, but their abilities had been of no use to him. Frowning, he asked, "How does he fight?"

"Since when were you so interested in fights?" Ezart asked, but he was in too good a mood to question Daren any further. Besides, he was more

interested in explaining Elian's greatness. "He wields sabres, twin sabres, and is so fast that he weaves a net of steel around himself. Even Shain Baylian couldn't find an opening."

"Oh..." Dar replied, deep in thought. It appeared that Dark Sun had to re-enter the Battle Simulator but that might blow his cover. He had put on his horrible glasses again just so he could prevent this from happening. Although he was told they were not fashionable, they did help create a good disguise. After all, style was the least of his worries.

"Eat up, Dar! My treat!" Ezart declared, heartily clapping Daren on the back. He had to be in an incredibly good mood to speak the words "my treat" since Daren had an insatiable appetite that could not be fully supported by his meagre budget.

Daren replied with a small "thanks" before he began devouring the two large plates of food. Beside him Ezart started to daydream, while chewing on his bread.

At that moment, three most unexpected individuals walked into the noisy cafeteria. They seemed to be searching for someone. While they were looking around, the surrounding students began to recognise them. These three were the very same people who had fought Ezart, Shain, and Dark Sun in the battle simulator: Elian, Eloise, and Eli.

Silence swept through the cafeteria. As if petrified, nobody moved an inch. There was even someone who had paused while eating noodles. His chopsticks were poised in one hand while noodles dangled from his lips. He seemed to be frozen as he stared blankly at the new arrivals.

It did not take long for the trio to find what they had been looking for. They swiftly walked towards their overly obvious target, Ezart, whose table stood out in the overcrowded cafeteria mostly because of its size and lack of people.

Elian grinned widely at Ezart and said, "Yo."

"It's you! That was an awesome fight!" Ezart exclaimed, hardly containing his excitement.

"Indeed, it's a shame that you and Baylian are not part of the ECS" said Elian as he revealed his usual expression of exaggerated regret.

Ezart raised his eyebrows. He was about to ask when Elian wanted to battle next but was interrupted by a rather rude girl.

"You're Ezart, right?" Eloise asked bluntly.

"That's me." Ezart plainly replied.

"Are you acquainted with Dark Sun?" Eli asked. Usually, he never spoke much, but this time he was anxious to discover Dark Sun's identity.

"Dark Sun?" Ezart asked, puzzled. "I've only seen him once in the battle simulator. It was Baylian who fought him before."

"Did you truly see him only once?" A sliver of doubt briefly clouded Elian's face only to be replaced by an expression of innocence, "but he

told me that he was close to you! He even said that we should come find you if we were looking for him."

At this point, Daren looked up, his eyes hidden behind thick lenses. He was well aware that he had never met him as Dark Sun, let alone told Elian how to find him.

"Huh?" Ezart replied, frowning. "I've never even spoken to him, how can I be close to the guy?"

"Oh, I see." Elian glanced at Eli from the corner of his eye and apologised to Ezart, "Maybe it was someone else, I probably heard the name wrong... This sucks! Now I don't know where to find Dark Sun."

Elian's actions and Eli's embarrassed expression did not escape Daren's observant eyes. He knew about Eli's ability to read minds, so he was being extremely careful in order to avoid being read, otherwise his secret identity would easily be exposed.

"Eh? Haven't I seen you before?"

Eloise had finally noticed Daren, who had been quietly sitting on the opposite side of the table. Even if they were all focused on their mission it should not have taken them this long to realize he was there. His neat, clean appearance was difficult to ignore.

However, Eloise was unable to recognise him, even though she had met him only a little while ago. Are my black framed glasses really that ugly? Daren wondered. He hesitated, not knowing whether he should admit he

was the one she had stopped in the plaza or continue eating and play dumb.

In truth, even though the glasses had a terrible effect on his appearance, it was not so bad that he would be unrecognisable by someone he had just met. The real reason Eloise could not recognise him was that his mouth, now stuffed with food, heavily altered his appearance. With the help of the glasses, he could not be more unrecognisable.

Therefore, the moment Daren swallowed his food, Eloise screamed. She immediately grabbed his glasses, tossed them onto the floor and started grinding them with her foot.

As expected from Eloise, who could easily wield a giant mace, the floor beneath her foot was dented and scratched. The unfortunate glasses were reduced to a pile of dust that was soon blown away by a passing breeze.

"M-my glasses..." Daren stared blankly at the spot where his glasses had once been.

Everyone was gaping, all wondering what this poor boy could have done to earn a grudge such as this.

"You're not allowed to wear ugly glasses like these ever again!" Eloise declared.

"Ah, you're the boy from the plaza." Elian said, finally recognising Daren.

Daren was speechless. He knew he did not have to listen to what she said. He was not afraid of her freakish strength. But at that instant, every fiber of his being warned him that ignoring her demands would be incredibly foolish.

After a moments hesitation, he replied simply with a noncommittal "Oh". This was how he answered when he did not know what else to say.

"You can't just say 'oh', you need to promise me you'll never wear glasses again." Eloise refused to let him off the hook.

"Um... but I'm short-sighted..." She had him cornered. All he could do was try to reason with her.

"So what if you're near sighted! You can wear contacts! I would even pay for you to get an eye operation. I'll do whatever it takes to keep you from wearing glasses!"

It was as if Eloise had morphed into a Rakshasi<sup>1</sup>. Her terrifying expression made Daren want to cry. She then screamed with a voice that was an octave higher than usual, "You're just. Not. allowed. To wear. Glasses!"

S-so scary! I think I'm about to cry, gege...

"My, why are your eyes so red? Oh well, you're even cuter this way..."

Suddenly, Rakshasi turned into 'a loving big sister', with a gentle face that seemed to be saying that she wanted to give him a 'sisterly hug'. She then proceeded to comfort Daren who was shivering with fear, "Don't be scared, jiejie2 will protect you!"

Daren was trapped in Eloise's tight embrace. He would not have been able to break free even if he had wanted to. Although, Eloise seemed warm and gentle, she was the one who had caused him to cry with her Rakshasi-like expression in the first place. But what was even scarier was the drastic change in her attitude. With tears in his eyes, Daren looked at Ezart helplessly, wishing he would come to his rescue.

Unfortunately, Ezart was not interested in being a hero to save the 'damsel' in distress. Therefore, he turned away and continued to eat his bread.

Elian, on the other hand, was laughing so hard that he could hardly stand. He had to use Eli's shoulder to support himself.

"Goodness, Eloise, shouldn't you at least find out their names before you hug them?" Elian teased, "What if someone wants to know the name of the pretty boy you forcefully fondled?"

"What do you mean 'forcefully fondled'? How is this fondling?" snapped Eloise, "We are equally attracted to each other. This is mutual affection!"

"Are you blind? Can't you see you made him cry? You call this mutual affection?" Elian muttered.

"What did you say?" Eloise replied sharply, daring him to answer.

"Say, kid, what's your name?" asked Elian, a huge smile stretching across his face as he tried to change the topic.

"Daren Avery," he said timidly, using his pseudonym.

"Oh, Dar, nice name."

Elian grinned at Daren and patted him on the head. He was starting to treat him like a little brother.

Daren looked up at him, feeling pleasantly surprised. Elian had actually called him Dar without having to be told!

"You're like my gege!" exclaimed Daren.

"Eh? I'm like your gege?" asked Elian, slightly surprised by this statement. What an odd coincidence! Dar has a brother that's just like me.

"Yup!" Daren nodded vigorously.

"Then come here didi, let gege give you a hug!" With another dramatic expression, he pulled Daren close. He then gave Eloise a smug look that seemed to say: See? This is mutual affection!

Eloise was fuming. She was about to separate them but changed her mind once she saw how happy Daren was. "Just because you resemble his brother," she muttered bitterly.

In truth, Elian and Daren's brother were nothing alike. They had completely different personalities. Daren just had a naive tendency to believe that any man who smiled at him was *gege*.

"Great! From now on, I have a little brother to love!" Elian looked at Daren with tears in his eyes and asked, "Is it okay for me to come back and visit you Dar?"

"Yes! Of course Elian-gege, you must come visit!" Daren was overjoyed. Not only had he gained a new brother but he had also made two new friends: Eloise and Eli.

Elian's smile faltered for a moment when he heard Daren say "Elian-gege". But still he patted Daren's head lovingly and said, "Of course, I promise I'll come."

"You promised!" Daren smiled brightly.

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Once they left the cafeteria, Elian, Eloise, and Eli walked in silence towards the central part of the school. Their destination, the headmaster's main office building, was not accessible to normal students. The ECS's 'classroom' was inside this building, though for the students of ECS there was no such thing as 'going to class'.

"Elia!" Eloise exclaimed suddenly. The trio came to a halt as Elia turned around, now showing a face completely void of emotions.

In a reprimanding tone, Eloise continued, "If it was just to get close to Ezart, you didn't have to use Dar, right?"

Elia's exaggerated cheerfulness had been replaced by a mirthless veneer. "I had my reasons. Didn't you guys notice? Dark Sun's hair is silver and so is Daren's; they even have a similar build."

"You suspect that Dar is Dark Sun?" Eloise asked, dumbfounded.

Elia did not answer her, instead he turned to his other companion and asked, "Eli, did you catch anything?"

"I could only read fragments, but there was nothing about Dark Sun." Eli replied frankly.

Elia nodded. He knew Eli's mind reading ability was not a hundred percent correct because the brain's thought process was incredibly complex. More often than not, thoughts were read as intertwining layers and Eli was only able to decipher the few fragments that had broken away. During combat, an opponent's thoughts are focused on the battle at hand, which makes thoughts and intentions easier to read than during normal conversations.

"Pick up anything?" Elia asked tentatively.

It was not the first time he had relied on Eli's mind reading ability in order to complete a mission. Even though Eli could not control what information he received, Elian knew that seemingly useless information could in fact lead to something useful.

"Glasses, ugly, master, game console, command... There were also some thoughts about us towards the end. They were mostly about you." Eli hesitated for a second before continuing, "Elian...liar, smile, Dar and gege."

"He thought I was a liar?" Elian asked, perceptively.

Eli shook his head, "I'm not sure, maybe there was someone else's name in between that I didn't catch. Maybe he wasn't even talking about you because he was sincerely happy when he called you 'Elian-gege'."

Elian's expression hardened when he heard this, but was quickly replaced by his former, serious look.

"Impossible!" Eloise suddenly shouted, "There is no way Dar is Dark Sun. You must have been mistaken, Elian. They're completely different people! Dar is so cute and innocent, while Dark Sun is so...so scary!"

This time, Elian's expression really changed. He looked at Eloise with a sinister smile, "Eloise, even after working with me for so long, you still do not realise just how many hypocrites there are in this world? It wouldn't be that surprising if your little Dar were to turn into a demon while your back was turned."

"I'd find it very strange." Eloise was still thinking of a good comeback when Eli spoke up in a low voice.

"As a mind reader, I might not be able to always acquire useful information, but I have no problem using my ability to discover a person's true nature."

Eli turned to Elian, "Your thought process is fast. You have many complex thoughts that are constantly intertwined with one another. People like you are often cunning and crafty schemers."

Elian stared blankly at Eli for a second, but did not deny it.

"Daren is quite the opposite. His thought processes are very slow and they're fewer than the average person. His thoughts are all organised in one simple line."

"Wait, what do you mean by that? What kind of a person is he?" Eloise began panicking, afraid that Daren's cuteness and innocence could all be a charade.

Eli paused for a few seconds before saying, "I've only seen thoughts like his in the mind of a child. He's like a little kid."

Eloise was pleased when she heard that. She then looked smugly at Elian. Giving him a look that said "See?"

Elian simply ignored her and continued asking more questions, "Have you ever misjudged someone?"

Eli glanced at Elian and explained, "I've misinterpreted direct thoughts, but I've never been wrong about a person's nature." He paused, then added, "Never truly been wrong, anyways."

"Never 'truly' been wrong?" Elian emphasized.

"Dual personality disorders. I read such a person once." Eli clarified, "Actually, I should say, I first read one of his personalities and decided that the person was a simple-minded, innocent, and gentle guy. However, when I turned around, he put a knife in my back. When he had tried to stab me, his entire thought process had changed... It wasn't until after the incident that I found out he had dual personalities."

"Then, is it possible that Daren is the same?" Elian asked after a moment of hesitation. He knew dual personality disorders were uncommon and Dar seemed more normal than someone suffering from this disorder.

"Elian! You won't be satisfied until you've hurt Dar?" Eloise asked furiously, "He even cheerfully called you 'Elian-gege'!"

"So? Eloise, don't forget that this is a mission assigned by the headmaster! We must bring him Dark Sun. If we fail, we have to do three times the amount of graduation missions we have now."

"But..." Eloise reluctantly gave up after hearing this.

Eli ignored the little fight between his two companions and continued

his explanation, "I can't confirm whether Daren has dual personalities or not until his second personality is exposed. But based on my past experiences, there is a high possibility of him having dual personalities."

"What?!" Both Eloise and Elian stared at him in shock. Even Elian had little hope for this dual personality theory.

"He's too innocent for his age. In fact, it's very abnormal." Eli said, before adding a final explanation, "The guy I met was like that. One personality was more magnanimous than the average human being, while the other was extremely violent."

Eloise started panicking upon hearing this. Elian, on the other hand, was now more certain than ever that Daren was related to Dark Sun. They must not lose track of this piece of evidence!

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"Bye Ezart! See you tomorrow!" Daren called out as he cheerfully waved goodbye.

Nowadays, they often walked home together because they both lived in the same direction... In truth, they had been walking home together from the beginning. The only difference now was that they walked side by side instead of Ezart walking ahead and Daren following behind.

"Tomorrow?" Ezart asked, remembering something, "Oh! Go to school on your own tomorrow. I might skip it."

"Eh? Why?" Daren's cheerful demeanor vanished instantly.

"I'm busy tonight, so I don't know if I'll go tomorrow," Ezart explained with a shrug.

"But..." Daren said, wanting to make him change his mind,

"Students are supposed to go to school every day, right?" Ezart rolled his eyes and snapped, "I can even tell what you're going to say."

"Then you should go to school..." Daren's tiny voice trailed off.

"I don't have time! I need to make money! Did you think I was some rich kid like you who can casually buy a game console worth more than 20,000 dollars?!" Ezart humphed with disdain.

Daren asked dejectedly, "So you're going to work?"

"Something like that. I'll be fighting in an underground arena." Ezart checked his watch, "I don't have the time to explain, if I'm late, you'll be paying for the money I lose!"

With that final threat, he turned and walked away. A wave was the only goodbye Daren got.

"Oh... Bye then, Ezart!" Understanding the situation, Daren quickly said his farewell.

Ezart left without looking back.

Daren waited until he could no longer see Ezart's silhouette before heading home himself. As he walked, he pondered, "What's an underground arena? Did he say "fight" an underground arena...Hm... Is 'underground arena' a person, and is it Ezart's job to fight him?"

"Should I help Ezart fight?"

Daren was lost in thought for the rest of the way home. Before he knew it, he had arrived at the mansion.

Daren retrieved his keys from around his neck and opened the door. The entire house was pitch black but it did not bother him.

He knew that gege was still working. Papa Avery, on the other hand... was supposed to pick him up. However, he usually ended up losing track of time while conducting his experiments and often failed to show up.

Every time he had failed to pick up Daren, papa Avery had had to face gege's wrath. There had even been times when Daren had to rush home just to stop his brother from killing papa. After Theodore's many near-death experiences, Daren insisted that he would be walking home with a friend and did not need papa to escort him anymore.

That was when the daily patricide attempt came to a rest.

The entire living room lit up when Daren flicked on the light switch. The room had a simple layout. It had light green walls, forest green couches,

a long glass tea table, and two large book shelves. These were filled with all sorts of story books. Of course, all of them were for Daren.

The house was divided according to function. The first floor had the kitchen and the living room, while the second floor consisted of the bedrooms.

Daren walked up to the second floor where three separate doors greeted him. He entered the middle one without hesitation. This was his room.

He turned on the lights to get a better look at his surroundings.

There was a large and cozy bed in the middle of the room with many stuffed animals on it. There were even a few story books on the pillows. It seemed like a child's room.

However, there were objects lying on a large work desk that would never be present in a child's room.

There were a few dismantled guns, several cases of bullets, all kinds of daggers, and a few seemingly unfinished bombs. There were power tools which seemed to be in good condition and even a drill with a diamond tip.

The room seemed completely out of balance. One side was filled innocent looking toys, while the other side had objects that would usually be found in the possession of a murderer.

Daren stepped into his room, set his school bag on his chair and paused for a moment of thought before opening his bag. In it were school supplies such as notebooks, a pencil case, and also something resembling a lunch box. He opened the latter to reveal a bunch of snacks and candies.

Daren tossed a few candies into his mouth and twisted a particular star shaped candy a couple of times. Then, with a crack, a rectangular hole appeared on the side of the box. He reached into it and pulled out silver goggles and a globular rubber-like substance.

Daren stretched the blob of black rubber and it turned into long boots.

He then took off his uniform to reveal the clothes underneath: a fitting red t-shirt and jeans.

This combination of clothing was Dark Sun's typical outfit!

Dark Sun wondered if he should take a shower first or read his story books... But when his eyes glimpsed the dismantled guns on his desk, the look of innocence in his eyes instantly disappeared, and the thought of reading vanished...

I should finish working on these first! Having decided, Dark Sun finally sat down and began assembling his guns.

He had hardly begun when a beep from the front of his desk interrupted him. This indicated an incoming call, so Dark Sun looked up from his work and pressed the answer button.

The seemingly ordinary cement wall in front of his desk revealed a flat, rectangular screen. With a flash a handsome, red eyed, charismatic man appeared onscreen.

Seeing Daren, the caller's face softened and in a loving voice, he said, "Dar..."

Upon, hearing his name a smile appeared on Dark Sun's face, changing him back to Daren, who cheerfully replied, "Gege!"

The blond man on the screen was Devon Solaris, the brother Daren had been talking about all day.

"Dar, you're so adorable today!"

The moment he heard the word 'gege', Devon's intimidating and authoritative appearance completely disappeared, as if it had only been an illusion. A mesmerized expression now spread across his perfect features. It was as if the word 'gege' could melt even the hottest sun.

Daren smiled, "Gege, are you coming home soon?"

"Yes! Yes! I'm coming home immediately, wait for me..."

"Solaris Emperor, you called home to inform him that you have to work overtime and will not be able to go home." A dutiful voice reminded him from the side.

Devon froze, then waved as if he was swatting flies, "Bill, cancel the appointment."

"My name is Kyle." He customarily corrected. The sound of rapid typing could be heard from Kyle's direction. When it stopped, Kyle began his report.

"It's been a month since your last meeting with your alliance partners. Letters urging you to start a meeting have accumulated to two hundred and thirty six letters. There were twelve thousand two hundred and fifty five calls pleading for this meeting and twenty six gossip magazines are wondering if the Solaris Emperor had suffered serious injuries from the incident and had never recovered. Five newspaper companies are speculating whether you even survived the incident. In a few days, there will be people believing that you are already died and the current Devon Solaris is your doppelganger."

Devon stiffened upon hearing the report. He knew this meeting was important, but every time he saw didi's adorable smile nothing else seemed to matter.

"Gege has a meeting? You're not coming home?" There was a hint of disappointment in Daren's voice.

"No..."

Devon struggled for a while, but then with a loud bang Kyle dumped a mountainous pile of papers in front of his boss. The corner of Devon's mouth twitched and he finally gave in, "Yeah, I'm going to... a meeting."

*Sob* I wanna go home and see didi...

"Oh, do your best, gege." replied Daren. Even though he was slightly disappointed, he knew he was going to see his brother tomorrow and did not feel quite as upset.

"Okay." Devon was so moved that the urge to hug his little brother almost made him forget about the screen.

"And good luck to you too, Kyle!" Daren grinned.

A crashing sound came out of the telephone as if something or someone had fallen. That someone murmured, "He actually remembered my name." He briefly glared at Devon then turned back to the telephone and said, "Yes, I'll do my best."

"Dar, remember to tell Theodore to take you out to dinner. If you want to go anywhere to play, tell him to take you there. Also, remember to tell him to drop you off at school... Oh wait, you're going to school with your classmate now. Then, tell him to buy you breakfast. Oh..oh and remind him to do the laundry. He'll need to wake you up tomorrow morning as well. He must also put a handkerchief and some napkins in your bag..."

Devon was exactly like a nagging mother, already giving plenty of orders to the absent Theodore.

"Okay, I'll tell papa Avery." Daren nodded seriously.

"Solaris Emperor, it's time for the meeting."

"Alright!" Devon yelled at Kyle. Turning back to the screen, he spoke to Daren in a gentle voice, "Dar, gege loves you very much!"

"Dar really loves gege too." replied Daren cheerfully.

"*Sob* Dar said he loves me, I'm so touched..."

"Solaris Emperor, you should go to the meeting now!"

"No! I'm going home to see Dar..."

"Meeting!"

"Bye, gege."

Daren waved cheerfully and hung up without further delay.

As the screen went pitch black, Daren's innocent smile disappeared and, on the other end, so did Devon's veneer of a perfect older brother. His gentleness was reserved only for didi. His face was now absent of all warmth and his speech was as cold as ice.

"Has everyone arrived?"

"A few have taken the day off, but everyone else is here." Even Kyle

reassumed his business-like appearance. Using his computer he effortlessly determined who had or had not already arrived at the meeting room.

"Taken the day off?" The Solaris Emperor's voice was frigid.

"This time ten of them have taken the day off. It's a tad abnormal." Kyle reported frankly. "It would appear that this behavior is a result of the explosion at the headquarters the other day as well as the fact that you have not issued any significant orders this past month."

"Oh?" The corner of Devon's lips curled into a smirk. "They doubt my authority? Interesting."

"It's probably because you've been a little lenient lately." Kyle replied honestly.

"Lenient?" Devon rubbed his chin softly before he looked up with a brilliant smile, "All of my leniency is given to Dar. No one else will ever receive even a fraction of it."

This period of compassion... was nothing more than a facade.

The plan was to feign injury, then swiftly pounce on anyone that dared offend him. This would ensure that none would ever dare rebel against him, no matter the situation.

"I never want to see those people again" Devon calmly ordered.

All Kyle had to do was type the word 'delete' into the database and the fates of those in question would be sealed.

"Start the meeting."

Devon Solaris, the Solaris Emperor, was the ruler of the all powerful Solaris Federation. He was also referred to as the Sun God, his word was absolute.

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Daren took a break from assembling his guns and decided to go find Theodore as his brother had instructed. Even though he had not seen the doctor since he arrived, Daren knew exactly where to find him.

He left his room, jumped down to the living room below and sat on a single sofa among a set of others.

He placed a hand on each armrest and declared, "Second floor basement". Instantly, the sofa sunk into the floor. As it disappeared into the floor, an identical one rose to take its place. The only difference was that this one had no trace of Daren.

After continuing down for several floors, Daren's sofa finally came to a stop. In front of him was an extremely thick metal door. Behind the door was a basement specially designed by Devon. It was abnormally durable so that a sudden explosion, would not affect the house above.

The precaution was required since this was Theodore's laboratory and he never took safety into consideration when it involved his experiments.

Daren politely pushed the button on the intercom. As usual, there was no answer, so he simply let himself in.

As soon as he pushed the door open, the strong odor of formalin rushed over him. The instant he saw what was going on in the lab he understood why the smell of preservatives was so strong. On three separate operation tables lay dissected and mutilated bodies.

The rest of the lab was just as macabre. An unidentifiable liquid was bubbling on a table to the side. On the shelves sat countless jars containing human organs. Some of these organs were unknown even to a cyborg such as Daren himself.

Such a repulsive environment was enough to make anyone throw up. However, Theodore could spend days cooped up in this mentally, visually and nasally traumatising place. He would stay in there until his boss forcefully dragged him to the surface, afraid that Theodore might become a part of his own corpse collection.

"Papa Avery." Daren called out, completely ignoring the horrifying scenes in the lab. His eyes were focused on something that was virtually indistinguishable from the corpses. It could only be identified as a living human being because it was still standing and holding an operation knife, speedily cutting away at the corpses.

At that moment, the live "corpse" slowly raised its head, revealing bloodshot eyes. Theodore's surgical mask made it impossible to read his

emotions.

"Gege asked me to remind you to take me out to dinner, take me out to play, buy me breakfast in the morning, do the laundry, wake me up in the morning, put my handkerchief and some tissues in my back pack..."

Daren recited the orders his brother had left for papa Avery word for word.

After hearing all that, the live "corpse" paused for a second and then resumed the dissection of the corpse on the table. It was as if he had never heard any of the orders.

Daren was used to this lack of reaction. He simply asked again, "Papa Avery, will you take me to dinner?"

Nothing.

"Then I'll go buy something for you to eat."

Still no response.

Daren absently took down the dirty surgeon gowns hanging on the clothes stand and murmured as if talking to himself, "I'm taking your clothes to launder. Tomorrow morning I'll come down again to knock you out so you can get some sleep. I'll also change you into some clean clothes. And don't forget to eat the bread I'll be bringing you for breakfast!"

Again, no response.

"Bye-bye papa Avery." Daren said before leaving.

The live "corpse" heard at least those two words: 'bye-bye'. He mechanically replied with a raspy voice, which sounded as if he had not spoken for many years. It sounded something like 'bah-bye'.

The metal door closed, once again isolating the stench and the zombie-like human from the rest of the world. Daren returned to his room, put on his visor, picked up a black backpack, and left to buy dinner as Dark Sun.

Even though Gege did not like him appearing as Dark Sun in public, every time he went out as Daren, he always ran into delinquents and robbers due to his child-like appearance. Gege's orders to hide Dark Sun's abilities, meant Daren had to take the beatings and have his possessions snatched away.

After many such incidents, Daren learned his lesson: if he was to go out alone, he must do so as Dark Sun.

Even when he went out as Dark Sun, he would use the secret tunnel connecting his house to the abandoned factory across the street where nobody was ever around.

Soon, Daren reached a noisy and crowded street. He might have changed his outfit but he was still the innocent Daren, meaning anything remotely interesting would instantly capture his attention. As he walked

along the streets, his main thought was about finding an interesting restaurant for dinner.

However, he ended up walking back and forth between two restaurants, uncertain which to choose.

"Come, come! Today there are three rounds of battle in the underground arena! Guaranteed entertainment!"

Underground arena? Didn't Ezart say something about that? Daren spun around to look at the guy who had been yelling.

A few young men, with heavily painted face and bodies, were laughing while carelessly tossing leaflets around. Most of the pedestrians jumped away to avoid them, but Daren saw a few interested ones going up to ask the multi-colored men about the competitors in tonight's arena.

"Don't miss it! The most anticipated round tonight is the round where the King of Might challenges the King of the Arena! It's guaranteed to be exciting! It's guaranteed to be awesome!"

Daren walked into the rain of leaflets and picked one up. The heading claimed it would be the world's most violent and bloody battle: King of the Arena VS. King of Might. King against king! As usual, there was an address included at the bottom.

The underground arena is actually a place to fight?

Daren was quite surprised. This meant Ezart was not satisfied with

simply fighting in the simulator during the day. He was even going off to fight at night!

Would there be strong fighters there? Dark Sun's thoughts surfaced.

No! Daren quickly shook his head. He still had to buy dinner for papa Avery.

His mind was set. He would buy dinner and return home immediately!

"The Kings of tonight's battle are evenly matched! It's a fight between equals! It wouldn't be surprising if one of them gets killed!" The advertisers yelled. Even though it was frightening to hear that someone could get killed, Daren was sure most people would attend in the hopes of seeing one of the contestants meet this unfortunate fate.

As expected, the people who had been asking about the contestants now held a frightened look, which also betrayed a hint of anticipation.

Daren, however, froze upon hearing this and looked at the advert again. What if the King of Might is Ezart? Ezart wouldn't get killed, would he?

Daren came to a halt in front of a restaurant, looked up at it, then back down at the leaflet, unsure of what to do.

"Hey you! Are you going to eat or what? If not, don't just stand in the way!" yelled the waiter, impatiently.

Daren did not respond. The enraged waiter came back with a coworker ready to beat up the brat. When they approached Daren...

"Three super sushi set. Take out," Daren ordered calmly, handing over a first-class Solaris credit card from the world's largest Solaris bank. This card was so rare that not even a hundred of them existed.

The waiter's raised fist dropped limply to his side. With great respect, he bowed and spoke as politely as he possibly could, "...We'll bring it to you immediately."

Papa Avery did not care if he ate his meals on time anyway, so Daren would buy dinner for three. He would bring Ezart his share first, and then bring papa Avery's home later.

That was what Daren decided.

\*\*\*\*\* EH v02c03 END\*\*\*\*\*

## Notes

1Rakshasi: A female, man-eating monster

2Jiejie: Older sister

Dual personality: was previously interpreted as bipolar.

Eclipse Hunter v02c04

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## Chapter 4: Devil's Love

If the Devil reaches out,  
The people bleed,  
If the people reach out,  
The Devil weeps.

Daren was glad that he had come as Dark Sun. The place appeared to be an old stadium. There was a rock and weed strewn running track surrounded by step-like seats riddled with cracks. The entire area appeared to have been completely neglected.

However, this wasteland currently had a energetic atmosphere that did not match its appearance. Large crowds were sitting on the steps, in odd clothing, and hairstyles that were even more outrageous than Ezart's spiky orange hair. The crowd roared, yelled and cheered passionately, in constant competition with each other. Even a few fights broke out, leaving behind battered, bleeding victims.

Daren was surrounded by this sort of people and he was not particularly happy about it. Usually if he went outside with his innocent appearance, he would get picked on and sometimes robbed by exactly these types of people.

Therefore, he was in a hurry to find Ezart, but it was so noisy and

overcrowded that he could barely make out what the people around him were saying. The only light in the vicinity was aimed at the fighting ring, leaving everywhere else in darkness, it was not a good place to search for someone.

Daren began to realise that if Ezart did not enter the ring, he would not be able to find him even if he searched all night.

But, I bought sushi for his dinner. Daren thought, feeling slightly disappointed. He might not be able to give Ezart his food or cheer for him during the fight.

Should I wait until after his fight, and then give this to him as a late snack? Daren thought this was a good idea, after all simply cheering on Ezart seemed a bit unnecessary, he might as well wait patiently until Ezart won his fight.

Daren was convinced that it was impossible for Ezart to lose considering the strength he had.

The fight organisers knew that they could not let the impatient, hot-headed crowd wait too long. A host clad in bright yellow stepped into the ring and yelled at the chaotic crowd with all his might. This served to make the crowd rowdier than ever.

Within this fiery atmosphere, Daren had to face the randomly flailing fists of the people around him.

He managed to evade every punch with his superhuman reflexes, but

there were far too many people. No matter where he went he was in constant contact with someone, and to Daren's super alert senses, this was not a good thing; each time someone brushed past him, he instinctively determined whether that person was a threat or not. His started to feel unsettled and claustrophobic.

I think I'll walk further away from this crowd...

Daren tried to squeeze his way out, but halfway through the crowd, he heard the host introduce the king of the new generation, King of Might.

Daren immediately turned his head and tried to see whether this King of Might was Ezart ...red corner, where's the red corner?...There!

The one sitting in the red corner was wearing a mask!

Daren felt desperate. Now he had no way to figure out whether or not that was Ezart. If not, then he had come here for nothing.

Of course! All he had to do was observe the way this person threw his punches.

Daren attempted to force his way back through the crowd towards the ring. It would be easier to recognise him at a shorter distance.

The battle had already started by the time Daren reached the edge of the crowd. The King of Might's opponent appeared to be stronger and far more muscular. Compared to the King of Might's regular shirt and jeans the opponent was far more intimidating. His opponent had worn proper

wrestling tights which further emphasised his muscles. Not to mention, he constantly roared and flexed his muscles. The opponent had already won the crowd's favor with his appearance alone.

While the muscular man flexed, the King of Might stood still, his stance was lazy. He acted as if he was simply a part of the audience and not a fighter.

His lack of action aggravated the spectators. Some even threw an array of items towards the stage, aimed at King of Might.

"Ah, don't throw!" Daren panicked when he saw this. King of Might might be his friend Ezart!

Ah, you're still throwing!

When he found the person next to him throw a banana peel, Daren angrily hit the guy on the head, causing the latter to turn around and roar, "Who did that?" Daren guiltily turned away. Luckily, the place was overcrowded, and his movements were quick, so the man was unable to find the culprit.

Daren figured that he had avenged Ezart well enough, so he happily turned back to face the ring.

Now, it appeared that muscular man had finally finished his flexing and had begun attempting to provoke the King of Might. He snarled and shouted taunts at him but the King of Might did not say a word. He only threw a punch. The muscular man smiled mockingly at this and dodged

it easily.

The audience booed, disappointed by the King of Might's miss.

"Eh? Why did he miss on purpose?"

Daren was perplexed, he could not understand why the King of Might... no... Ezart, missed on purpose.

Obviously, Daren recognised Ezart. The strength of the punch and the way it was thrown was no doubt Ezart. In fact, even that casual way of standing was one of his trademarks!

Judging by the speed at which the muscular man avoided the punch, there was no way that Ezart would have missed.

The muscular man began to laugh, mocking Ezart, while the audience continued their jeering. Even while facing a scene like this, Ezart maintained his aloof persona and did not seem bothered at all.

A few stopped yelling and stared, dumbfounded. Slowly, more and more people fell silent, until the entire stadium became completely quiet. They were all staring at the muscular man's cheek.

A line of blood had appeared. At first, no one could understand how he could be bleeding since the fight had barely started.

Thinking back, the King of Might's had thrown only a single punch, but

he missed! His fist had missed by mere centimeters...

In fact, the line of blood seemed to be at the same spot where the fist had passed by!

Could the fist's passing have this kind of effect?

Now the muscular man realised something was wrong. He wiped his hand across his face and was shocked to find blood, for an instant his eyes betrayed fear. He felt paralyzed, wondering whether he should continue to trade his life for the prize money...

Daren could see that the "champion" was trembling.

Ezart truly deserved his title as Yelan Academy's god of disaster. The very wind from one of his punches could draw blood from his opponent's cheeks. This kind of power was beyond horrifying, even the violence-loving audience was in awe, the original boo's were completely gone. There were still a few people who had their arms raised and poised to throw, but they appeared to have become completely frozen.

As Ezart's eyes swept through the audience, many people smiled awkwardly and lowered their arms. They then bit into the rotten tomatoes and banana peels they had been holding and smiled as if they were enjoying it.

When Daren saw that the person he had hit earlier was eating the banana peel, he could not help but chuckle. He felt happy for Ezart.

At first, Daren had been worried about him, but he had been overthinking at the time. There was no way a normal person could ever compete with someone from Yelan Academy. Especially if that someone was the god of disaster whom 99% of the students were afraid of!

Only a cyborg like Daren could consider him weak and worry for his safety.

"I'll wait for Ezart in the back!"

No longer worried about Ezart, Daren quickly squeezed out of the crowd. He was glad to leave the horribly polluted air and the crowd which was noisy enough to drive him mad. However, the main reason he left early was because he had to change his appearance back to 'Daren Solaris' before Ezart won.

And for that... Ezart would not even need a minute.

With a single punch, the King of Might sent the champion flying out of the arena, and onto a few bystanders. They screamed and yelled under the crushing weight.

The King of Might looked at the defeated, unconscious 'champion' and coldly stated, "What a boring match."

He then casually turned and left the stage. No one even dared to breathe.

Upon reaching the stadium's foyer, he removed his mask, revealing a

dragon tattoo and spiked orange hair. The King of Might was indeed Ezart.

He impatiently threw the mask in a corner. This "cheap, airtight junk" made his face itch.

At that moment, the rusty foyer door creaked open and a bald man with a wide grin rushed inside. As soon as he entered, he gave Ezart the thumbs up and admiringly said, "You were great! I knew you wouldn't let us down!"

Ezart threw him a lazy glance. The last time Ezart had received money from this guy it had been thrown at him in anger, but now 'baldy' was a changed man.

"And the money?" Ezart asked, cutting to the chase.

Baldy inwardly cursed Ezart for his impolitely extended arm, but still maintained his obsequious appearance as he took out a big wad of cash.

"Here! Here!"

There was no use in being humble. Tonight, the terror that is Ezart not only opened the eyes of the audience to the meaning of true power but also served to warn the baldy that having a few armed bodyguards would not be enough to stop the god of disaster standing before him.

This fact both frightened and pleased the man. He was terrified because he could not control Ezart, but delighted because he had such a

fearsome fighter working for him. For an arena manager, this was like having a money tree.

Ezart snatched the wad of cash from him and stuffed it into his pocket without even counting it. "When's the next fight?" he asked.

"Well, we still have to talk it over..."

Baldy felt a little pained as he watched the cash disappear. He had actually given him more than what they had agreed on. But this amount was nothing if it meant keeping his new champion. Even now he was cooking up a scheme to rile up the audience for Ezart's next battle.

"When it's decided, call me."

Ezart had no patience for negotiations. He picked up his jacket, said his bit, then pushed opened the door with a 'creak' and left.

"Fuck! What the hell! How dare he treat me like this..." Ezart could hear the baldy cursing under his breath as the metal door closed.

However, he did not turn around to beat him up otherwise he would have to find himself a new arena manager. Besides, with a title like "Yelan Academy's God of Disaster", it was normal to find people cursing him behind his back.

Even the brainless Daren, who was as stupid as stupid could get, had probably cursed him a couple of times when his back was turned. After all, I gave that nerd quite a few cold glares, Ezart thought darkly.

"Ezart..."

He knew everybody called him the god of disaster behind his back. He wondered what that idiot called him when he was not around. Violent ogre? God of disaster? Brainless brute...

"Ezart!"

Ezart's expression suddenly stiffened. He stopped in his tracks, thinking he had heard the sound of that idiot calling his name. Was he hallucinating?

It's impossible for that nerd to still be wandering around outside at this hour, especially at a sick place like this. It's got absolutely nothing to do with model students... Im-...

"Ezart! Thank goodness. I thought I missed you." Daren was running towards Ezart with a foolish grin on his face and his hands waving wildly.

...possible.

Ezart was speechless, as he watched the student, who seemed completely at odds his surroundings, run towards him.

"You were amazing just now, Ezart!" Daren came to a stop before Ezart with a bright smile on his face.

You even went into the arena? And the delinquents didn't beat you to a pulp that even your brother wouldn't recognise? He thought incredulously.

"Oh right!" Daren rummaged through his bag and took out a large box, smiling happily as he opened it, "Look, I brought some midnight snacks for you. At first they were for dinner, but I got here too late and you were already in the ring, so now they're your midnight snacks. I bought some for myself too. Let's eat together.."

"What are you doing here?" Ezart interrupted him.

"I wanted to bring you food and cheer you on!" Daren explained as he opened the sushi box. He looked at the sushi worriedly, hoping they had not gone bad.

"How did you know I was here?" Ezart frowned. He did not remember mentioning the arena.

"I saw it on a flyer when I was buying dinner."

The flyer did not mention his real name, did it? You guessed it was me with only three words: King of Might? Ezart did not know whether he to call himself unlucky, or just call Daren lucky.

"Let's eat together?" Daren asked Ezart, apprehensively. He did not look very happy.

But Ezart just scratched his head and answered with a "Yeah".

Shortly, the two of them were sitting by the beach having a barbecue... The sushi really had gone bad.

With a single bite, the stink had rushed into Ezart's brain. He immediately gave Daren a punch on the head, because the moron had stuffed his mouth full of sushi, completely oblivious to the fact that the things in his mouth were no longer edible. That punch was enough to make him spit the food out.

"Idiot," Ezart said, snatching away the meat Daren was about to pick up.

"Hm?" Daren only stared blankly after having his food taken. He finally responded by taking the mushrooms, the only food left on the grill.

Real stupid... Ezart was a somewhat astounded.

"Next time, don't come looking for me at the arena. If you get buried by one of them, I'll have to dig you up to give you to your brother."

The more he watched, the more he was convinced that it would not be long before Daren gets himself beaten up and robbed, then buried in the mountains, or dumped into the sea if he continued to go to the messed up arena like he did tonight.

Even though Daren did not understand why he would get buried, he could not ask because his mouth was stuffed with mushrooms. He could only nod.

But then he realised that if he did not go to the arena anymore, he would not get to eat midnight snacks with Ezart again.

He hastily swallowed the food in his mouth and said, "But, but I still want to eat midnight snacks."

Ezart rolled his eyes and growled, "Are you an idiot? Can't you eat midnight snacks by yourself, or with your brother? You're rich anyway. You can go to a high class restaurant and avoid all this trouble!"

"I want to eat late night snacks with gege, but I also want to eat it with you..." Daren was a little disappointed. 'They' were enjoying it so much. Daren had already assumed that Ezart liked eating midnight snacks with him.

Ezart stiffened. Is this guy serious? Ezart had already given him enough protection. He did not have to try to flatter him.

But he could tell that Daren was looking increasingly disappointed. He was not eating much... Of course, for a normal human being, the amount he was eating was not what one would call 'not eating much', but from what Ezart knew, this behaviour was considered a 'loss of appetite' for Daren.

They ate in silence for a while until Ezart spoke up, trying to sound indifferent, "You don't have to come to the arena to eat midnight snacks with me. Can't you just invite me to have midnight snacks with you?"

"Eh?" Daren jerked his head up, "You mean I can ask you to have

midnight snacks with me?"

Ezart nodded.

Daren smiled brightly. He was already going to and from school with Ezart and now they could eat midnight snacks together. This must mean we're good friends now, right? I finally made a good friend!

With that thought, he finally regained his appetite. He cheerfully tossed all the raw meat from the plate onto the grill and after a few minutes, he ate it all.

"You can really eat. You eat so much yet you don't grow any muscles. Where does it all go? What a waste! You've eaten up almost all of my winnings!" Ezart snapped.

Daren only had the credit card gege had given him, and even though the card had an ATM function, he had never used it to withdraw money. Basically, he had already forgotten that the card had such a function. And street vendors like this one naturally did not take credit cards, so the bill ended up being Ezart's responsibility.

"Ah... You're out of money?" Daren exclaimed naively. He failed to notice that his outburst made the street vendor shoot them a very unfriendly glare.

Ezart rolled his eyes. Daren had taken his obvious exaggeration seriously again. To pacify the shopkeeper's murderous glare, he snapped loudly, "You idiot, how could you really eat up all my winnings? I didn't

mean it."

"Oh," Daren replied, and began to eat even more sloppily.

Ezart's mouth twitched at the sight of him. Is this guy the reincarnation of some starved man? I really don't know how his brother feeds him without going bankrupt.

"Ezart, you really do like battles, don't you. You even go to that arena after school," Daren mumbled as he ate.

"Facing those weaklings can't be called a battle. It's just fighting. No! It's pummeling," Ezart said disdainfully.

"If you don't like the arenas, why do you keep going?" Daren was completely confused.

"Didn't I tell you already?" With one look at Daren's ignorant expression, Ezart knew he had forgotten it completely. He impatiently repeated himself, "It's for the money, for food; don't you get it? If it wasn't for the money, I wouldn't be bothered going to the arena. I'd rather pick someone from school and just punch him than fight those pieces of shit. It's much more satisfying!"

"So you go even though you don't like it, just for the money?"

Daren didn't understand very well. He had been locked up in a laboratory ever since he was seven years old. When he came out, he had been spoiled by the Solaris Emperor. He knew nothing about the value of

money, much less the value in having to earn it.

"Duh! Or are you going to pay for my tuition fees and meals?"

Hearing Daren say voice his thoughts so plainly, even Ezart who understood Daren's stupidity couldn't help but yell in frustration.

"Sure." Daren nodded, "I'll give you money so you won't need to fight the battles you don't like."

Ezart stared at him blankly, then said, "What are you saying? Quit joking."

"I'm not joking. Gege gave me a lot of money. I'll give you some, and you won't have to fight in the arena again."

Daren's thoughts were simple. Gege had given him a lot of money and told him to buy whatever he wanted. If by chance he did not have enough, Daren was told to give gege a call, and he would send someone to 'buy' it.

But Daren did not know that the usual limit of Solaris Bank's most prestigious credit card was one billion yuan. If something could not be purchased with this amount then, most likely, money was not the problem. When Devon said he would send men over to 'purchase' the item, he meant he would send heavily armed troops to leave a check and take the item by force if need be.

Daren was naive and thought that since Ezart had already treated him

to meals twice, he was naturally allowed to give Ezart money to keep him from fighting battles he did not enjoy.

However, Daren had no idea that treating friends to meals and giving them money were two completely different things, especially when one was so much richer than the other.

At that moment, Ezart's expression turned cold. He still could not determine what Daren's true intentions were. Is he really that stupid? Is he really stupid enough to think that giving money is normal between friends?

Impossible. There's no way he could be that dumb.

So Daren is using money to 'repay' me for his protection, at the same time he's making sure I'll continue to look out for him.

Hmph! He's no different than the others. Just because he can't win in a fight, he thinks he can use money to make others submit to his will...

Ezart laughed coldly. He had experienced his share of rich brats offering him money for protection and he had always been merciless from the moment he recognised. He had not been satisfied until he sent them to the hospital with serious injuries. In fact, this was how he had gained the nickname 'god of disaster', even though he was always incredibly lazy.

The reason he had not beaten Daren already was because he was still a little confused. Was Daren truly the kind of person who would spend money for protection? It was hard to imagine that someone like him, who

brought midnight snacks in the middle of night, would think like that...

"Ezart, can your tuition be paid with credit cards?" Daren asked, slightly confused since his tuition was paid by gege, and if any problems ever came up, gege was the one who usually dealt with them. Ezart did not look very happy, so Daren assumed he could not use the credit card and quickly added, "It's okay. If it can't be paid with credit cards, I'll just tell gege. Gege will pay for your tuition!"

Without a word, Ezart slammed his chopsticks into the table. Their ends vibrated endlessly. Everyone around them, especially the shopkeeper, stared with wide eyes. The shopkeeper felt very fortunate that he had not gone up to them earlier to demand payment.

"Ezart, what's wrong?" Daren asked timidly.

Ezart suddenly stood up and said coldly, "I may be poor, but I'm not poor enough to ask money from my own classmate!"

With that, he left behind the small mountain of food and walked straight to the shopkeeper who was desperately trying to occupy himself by slicing meat but could not help but gawk at the chopsticks stuck in the table. When he saw Ezart walk towards him, his face flushed to a colour similar to the frozen meat that he had just taken out of the freezer.

Ezart swiftly took out a bundle of cash, bitterly tossed it onto the shopkeeper's cutting board, and said coldly, "Keep the change."

"W-wait, Ezart." said Daren as he stood up hastily.

Ezart stopped in his tracks and without turning around said, "From now on, we walk to school on our own. Don't bother talking to me anymore, I won't respond." With that, he stuck his hands into his pockets and slouched off.

Daren just stood there, confused. What happened?

I don't get it... Why? Didn't we become good friends that went to school and ate midnight snacks together? Why is Ezart angry? He even told me not to talk to him again... We can't go to school together. We can't... eat midnight snacks together...

Daren clenched both his fists and yelled at Ezart's retreating silhouette, "I don't want that!"

With hands in his pockets and back slouched, the gangster-like figure stopped moving.

"Aren't we good friends?" Daren asked.

Ezart's reply came rushing with the wind, "We never were."

\*\*\*\*

Theodore crawled out of the laboratory, wanting Dar to make instant noodles for him. But after dragging his starved body through every single room, he finally realized Dar was not home!

Theodore looked at the clock lifelessly. It was four in the morning. Dar isn't home at this hour?

"Could he have finally become..." A majestic expression spread across Theodore's face as he slowly let out the words, "A real teenager?"

That's right, Daren always comes home obediently for dinner, goes to bed at ten, then wakes up at five the next morning. This isn't how a teenager should behave! No! Normal people don't do that till they are sixty!

And only a creature like Devon, who's living in the last century, would think his younger brother is leading a normal life!

However, Devon himself is the kind of person who depends on coffee to stay awake and doesn't even go to bed till after midnight. He always wears the most fashionable clothes and even his hair is as stylish as it gets. Why does he make his brother live like a sixty-year-old man? Even his clothes are so last century.

"I'll solve this mystery eventually, anyway... might as well make instant noodles now or I'll never solve it."

His rumbling stomach and weak limbs were warning Theodore that if he did not have some food soon, he might have to ask Hades for the answer to this mystery in hell.

He ripped open a random packet of instant noodles, cracked a few eggs

into the bowl along with the shells and poured in some hot water. Theodore, no longer in control of his hands, comforted himself with the fact that eggshells were rich in calcium. The instructions on the packet had clearly stated that the noodle had to sit in the water for three minutes before it could be eaten. However, when he hazily caught sight of the black-cloaked grim reaper, Theodore forced himself to wait only thirty seconds before ripping off the noodle bowl cover and devouring the stiff noodles and half-cooked eggs.

He clearly did not comprehend the word 'hot' and finished the entire bowl of soup in under a minute. When he finished, he felt a sense of revival...

His life was saved, but he was still hungry. He decided to make another pack to satisfy his food deprived stomach. This time, he would definitely keep all the egg shells out of the noodle bowl and also wait three minutes obediently. Damn, uncooked noodles and eggs taste disgusting!

While Theodore was anxiously waiting in the living room for his 'delicious' second helping, he heard the sound of a key turning at the door. Theodore instinctively turned to look in its direction... He suddenly had a bad feeling about this!

Is the one home Daren or Devon?

If Devon was the one who came home, then he would notice that his obedient little brother was outside at four or five in the morning, and find the guy, who was in charge of looking after Dar, eating instant noodles in the living room. Speaking of Devon, didn't Dar mention something about his brother assigning a bunch of duties earlier?

With that thought, Theodore immediately tore off the noodle bowl cover. Although he had only waited one and a half minutes, he knew Devon was not compassionate enough to wait for him to finish his instant noodles before shooting.

No, if he was going to die, he had to at least finish his food!

In the face of death, the man slurped up a bunch of noodles at once. His lips were getting burnt when he glimpsed the person who had entered out of the corner of his eyes, Silver hair... It's Dar!

Oh, I'm saved. Thank goodness. Now I can continue my experiments!

Theodore immediately let the noodles in his mouth fall. He then placed the torn cover back on the bowl and resumed his last one and a half minute wait.

"Oh, it's you. You really scared me. I thought a year from today would be my death anniversary. Death wouldn't be a big deal, but there wouldn't be anybody left to continue my experiments. That would be terrible..." Theodore crouched down beside the low dining table, mumbling while he stared at the instant noodles.

Daren walked towards him, reached over Theodore's shoulder and placed a plastic bag containing several lunch boxes on the table.

"What's this?"

Theodore keenly smelled the aroma of what appeared to be food. He quickly opened the lunch boxes and cried out in joy. They were filled with barbecued goodies. This got him to immediately abandon the instant noodles and begin attacking the roasted meat.

"Da, you wer oud pasd minight habing a babecue? Wid who? De fwend you told me aboud befwo?" Theodore incoherently asked with his mouth stuffed with food, but he did not receive a response. That was when he noticed something was wrong. He recalled that usually when Dar got home, he would yell, "I'm home". When he saw Devon, he would call out "Gege", and when he saw him, he would call out "Papa Avery".

But this time he had not uttered a single word.

Theodore realized something was wrong. He jerked his head up only to find Daren with his back turned, about to walk upstairs.

"Dar? What's wrong?" Theodore asked, feeling suspicious.

Daren trembled for a moment before he shook his head and said, "Nothing."

Yeah right... Theodore frowned. He chewed on his mouthful of food as he walked towards the distracted Dar beside the stairs.

Theodore placed both his hands on Daren's shoulders, and with his mouth still full, he attempted to speak in the most gentle tone he could manage, "What's wrong, Dar? Tell Papa Avery about it, okay?"

Daren's shoulders quivered a little, and then he nodded and turned around slowly.

Theodore's jaw dropped. All the meat he had spent so long to chew, in preparation to swallow, absorb and turn into energy, fell onto the floor.

That was how much the two streams of tears rolling down Daren's cheeks shocked him.

"Wh-what... happened to you? Who bullied you? Who had the power to bully you? It can't be possible. Your robust body was my own crea... No. No, that's besides the point." Theodore spouted gibberish until he mercilessly pinched his own leg. The pain finally got him back to his senses.

After several deep breaths, he used his sleeves to wipe away the tears on Dar's cheeks. In serious yet sympathetic tone, he asked, "Dar, what happened? Tell Papa Avery, okay?"

Dar nodded briskly.

"I-I went to watch Ezart's arena, but the midnight snacks were spoiled, then we went to have barbecue, but E-Ezart stuck his chopsticks in the table, and won't be friends with me. I-I thought we were g-good friends..."

Daren lowered his head and said dejectedly, "He said we never were, and that I shouldn't talk to him again."

What an incoherent story! Theodore forcefully erased his expression of confusion and replaced it with one of understanding. Oh! Basically, there's a guy called Ezart who doesn't want to be friends with Dar anymore.

Theodore tried to remember what his most gentle tone sounded like... but no matter how hard he tried, he could only remember using that sort of voice when he tried to pick up beautiful women. Useless!

In the end, he simply lowered his voice and said, "It's okay if he doesn't want to be friends with you. There are lots of other classmates you can be friends with."

Daren looked down and said softly, "Everybody ignores me. They all hate me. Only Ezart didn't hate me. But now... I thought we were good friends. Why did he suddenly get mad?"

Don't look at me with those expectant eyes! Even your god-like brother wouldn't be able to figure out a reason from your incoherent description!

Theodore mind was screaming in agony. That pitiful expression and those hopeful eyes were making it impossible for him to speak the truth: "I don't know! Don't ask me!"

All Theodore could do was come up with nonsense, "Hm. Maybe it's just a small misunderstanding? Friends often misunderstand each other, and they often get into arguments. You can make up if you go apologise."

"R-really?" Daren looked up with his teary eyes glowing with hope.

"Yeah..." Theodore forced a smile. Maybe.

Who cares what happened. I just hope that guy called Ezart is sensible enough to forgive Dar. If Devon sees Dar crying, who knows what that brother-obsessed guy would do... He just might throw all Ezarts in the world into incinerators.

Daren wiped his tears. So that's how it is. All friends get into arguments? He still did not know why Ezart was angry, but it was probably because all friends need to have arguments with each other from time to time.

"Then I'll go apologize to Ezart later!" Daren looked at the clock. It was already five-fifteen in the morning. He could go to school soon and apologize to Ezart there, then they could continue being good friends!

The thought made him so excited that he wanted to run out the door immediately and go to school.

I hope nothing goes wrong... Theodore thought nervously. Seeing Dar so happy made him a little uneasy inside.

"Let me take you to school, okay?" Theodore, who spent all day in the laboratory, seldom suggested taking Dar to school. Ah! Let that be my effort for world peace. Right now, a drop of Dar's tear is even more dangerous than a nuclear bomb.

"No." Daren rejected immediately, "Then I can't go to school with Ezart.

I'm going to find him and apologize, then go to school with him." He even planned it out!

"Is that so..." Theodore scratched his face then decided to let it go.

He had already made an effort for world peace. If Dar came home in tears, there was no guarantee that Devon would not shoot him, or just destroy the world. So while he and the world were still safe and unharmed, he had better get to work on his experiments.

\*\*\*\*\* EH v02c04 END\*\*\*\*\*

Eclipse Hunter v02c05

Fifth Hunt – The Demon Must

Translator: SoulDead, Wryn

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Friend of a demon

Is no friend

Demon for a friend

Abandon not

Daren Solaris anxiously hurried along the path, afraid that Ezart would get to school before him. When he reached the road that Ezart took to go to school, he glanced at his watch. It was only seven. Normally, Ezart didn't get to this point until it was nearly eight; he certainly hadn't come by yet.

Daren had plenty of patience so he settled down to wait and diligently watch the road.

When the clock neared eight, Daren began to get nervous. Is Ezart not coming to class today? Come to think of it, yesterday he did mention that he might skip school today. But the fight last night in the underground arena didn't end so late, also during the barbecue he told me he'd come to class today...

What if he's so mad he doesn't want to come to school? Daren felt his heart sinking, unsure whether he should keep waiting or go on to school.

Classes began at eight twenty, so if he left now he would have time to walk. However, if he were to wait ten minutes, he would have to fly if he wished to make it in time. Daren hesitated, uncertain of what to do.

Would it be okay to apologize after Ezart turned up to class?

Lost in his thoughts, Daren didn't notice the unfriendly students that had gathered around him until they began closing in.

"Do you need something?"

He had already recognized all of them as classmates, so he wasn't on the alert.

To be precise, they were the classmates who had been making fun of him the day before. Of course, Daren hadn't caught on to most of the mockery; he didn't even fully understand what "mockery" meant.

"You had balls yesterday, huh, lookin' down on us like that," said a boy; his face contorted in anger.

Daren didn't understand; he'd never looked down on them. He always greeted his classmates earnestly every time they met, but they usually ignored him.

"What? Ya wonderin' how we'd dare screw with ya?" snorted a girl with multicolored hair. "Didn' realize we were at the barbecue joint las' night, didja?"

"Oh, really?" Realisation dawned upon him; no wonder they thought he was looking down on them—he hadn't even recognized them, let alone said hello.

Daren sincerely apologized, thinking it was all his fault, "I am really sorry that I didn't notice you; next time I'll be sure to say 'hi.'"

His apology made everyone freeze in shock, until a girl shouted, "Who'd wanna say 'hi' to trash like you? Get this, we ain't afraid of ya. Ye've

violated the Plague God's taboo, an' we heard 'im say that he ain't gotch'er back any more, an' he never says nothin' he don' mean. So he won' care even if we beatcha up in front of 'im."

Even though Daren had never learned about Ezart's nickname as the "Plague God" he knew who they were referring to, since he had only been with Ezart last night.

He immediately asked, "Which taboo?"

He very much wanted to know what he had done to make Ezart angry.

"Hmph!" The girl glared at him suspiciously, not sure whether this nerd really was being serious or just pretending. Not that it mattered; they weren't about to answer him either way.

A few of them exchanged glances. Although they had heard Ezart say he wasn't going to stick up for him anymore, they still did not dare to beat up Daren in front of him and risk having Ezart go back on his decision. That's why they were here, waylaying Daren outside the school.

After glancing at each other, they slowly closed in on Daren...

"What are you guys doing?"

With his back was against the wall, Daren by nature did not like being cornered without an escape route. He felt uneasy, despite knowing that these people were no threat at all.

"Nothing. We just want you to come play in the alley with us." One of them laughed sinisterly.

Daren was a little confused, but also a little happy; his classmates are acknowledging him now, and even asking him to play with them. But he needed to wait for Ezart.

"I'm sorry, but can we play another day? I have to wait for Ezart today, and it's almost time for class anyway. We'll be late."

"Fuck, didja think ya had a choice?" shouted one impatiently.

Stop wasting time y'all. Punch 'im and drag 'im there."

"Let's do it!" One of them raised his fist.

"Ezart!" Daren shouted, his sharp eyes catching a glimpse of orange-red spiky hair.

Everyone turned to look and, seeing that it really was the Plague God, froze in fear.

"Ezart!" Daren skipped forward happily.

Ezart coldly looked around at the situation. His classmates were already ganging up on Daren. He had thought the kid might last a day at the very least. No wonder the brat was so desperate for a bodyguard.

"Ezart, I'm sorry," Daren apologised wholeheartedly. "I must have offended you somehow. I'm sorry. I don't know what your taboo is, but I didn't do it on purpose. I'm really sorry. We can still be friends, right?"

Ezart remained silent. He walked past Daren without as much as a glance, as if no one had spoken to him.

Ezart... Daren faltered, his mind in confusion. He had apologised! Why was Ezart still ignoring him?

Witnessing Ezart's reaction, the students around Daren were completely convinced that Ezart did not care about the brat anymore. Their confidence buoyed immediately. Grabbing Daren's arms, they proceeded to drag him into the alley for a beating.

Daren absolutely hated people touching him, but right now, his gaze was fix on Ezart's back. He thought that if Ezart heard the sound of him being beaten and turned around, it would mean they were still friends. Maybe even closer friends than before. But, if he didn't turn...

A fist swung towards Daren's stomach. He didn't hide, dodge, nor suppress his voice. Under normal circumstances, a cyborg like himself wouldn't make a sound even if he was being beaten to death.

His eyes were fixed upon Ezart, still shining with hope through the depths of his dark pupils. Would that brutish silhouette of Ezart stop for him, turn around and save a friend?

The fearless and invincible Dark Sun was praying for someone to rescue Daren. Not just to save him physically, but more so to save Daren's mentality.

Daren needed a friend, someone other than his brother and Theodore Avery, who would smile at him. Otherwise he would never be able to step out into the world beyond those two people...

"Ezart..." Daren pleaded, hoping the other would not abandon him and give him a helping hand.

Hearing this cry, Ezart paused.

But, he did not turn around.

The footsteps did not stop.

No hand reached out to Daren, and the dark pupils that shone with hope was soon extinguished.

Daren was pushed into the alley and pummeled by the people around him. But how could it be more painful than his father's hatred?

How could it be more painful than having his bones replaced with metal, his muscles artificially strengthened, surviving countless surgeries, and his excruciating rehabilitation?

What does it matter compared to being unable to see his brother, the

only person who had ever loved him, for seven years?

How could it be more painful than being abandoned by his friend...

No! Had they ever been friends?

They never were.

Ezart's reply from the night before flashed through his head.

So that's how it was.

He never had any friends, and now...he never will.

Daren lay flat on the ground, using his arms to shield his face. He looked completely defenseless. His attackers were continuously punching him as if they wanted to kill. But beneath the arms, Daren's eyes were void of all human emotion.

I can't let them go on; master would be upset if my injuries are too obvious.

But I must never reveal Dark Sun's abilities...those were Master's orders.

Then...

Kill! Kill them all; then no one would know about Dark Sun!

Kill them all!

"Stop! Are you trying to kill him?"

Ezart? A crack suddenly appeared in his expressionless mask, revealing extreme anticipation. Daren searched for the source of the voice. It was...

Elian?

Even though Elian had no idea why Ezart and Daren had suddenly gotten into an argument, and a very serious one at that, Daren's face showed as if he had been abandoned by the world... Could such a person really be Dark Sun?

Elian pushed aside his irrelevant thoughts and took a deep breath. It was none of his business; he was only here to discover whether or not Daren was actually Dark Sun. Nothing else mattered.

With that thought, he looked on as the boy who called him "Elian-gege" was dragged into the alley, where countless fists landed cruelly on his thin frame. The gang pummeled him as if he was a sworn enemy, while the youth could only curl up on the ground like a shrimp, while attempting to shield his face with his arms.

Go on! If you are Dark Sun then these people are nothing; you have more than enough power to retaliate.

With only an eye peeking out from his hiding spot, Elian watched the situation unfold within the alley. How much more can such a weakling endure? Was he really going to stand here and watch the boy who called him "Elian-gege" get beaten to death before his eyes, just to prove he wasn't Dark Sun?!

If so, could he still be considered human?

Although "inhumanity" wasn't that rare of an occurrence: do these people even deserve to be called human?

Elian scoffed at those giving the beating, until he suddenly realised that his own indifference wasn't all that different.

He charged into the alley.

"Stop! Do you want to kill him?"

A few people stopped and turned, furious, to see what kind of suicidal idiot dared interrupt their beating!

"None of your fucking business! Now scram if you don't wanna end up the same!" yelled one of them maliciously.

"Whatever! Just drag him in and we'll beat 'em both. Then we won't have to take turns hitting that scrawny brat," snickered another person while kicking Daren in the side.

Seeing Daren take another hit, Elian's face darkened. "You'll all pay for this!"

"You hear that? He said we'll pay! Hahaha! I'm dying here."

They laughed in unison, practically rolling on the ground in their mirth.

Elian pulled out two knives... More specifically, they were two hilts, but these hilts weren't made of wood. Rather, they were made of a metal that had a beautifully delicate, pale-blue sheen. Holding these exceptional hilts in both hands, Elian fell into a simple, yet effective, fighting stance.

He didn't move a muscle as two blades of condensed light energy extended from the hilts. The flawless silhouette and pale blue glow demanded speechless awe.

"Those twin light sabers...he-he was the student from the ECS that defeated Ezart and Shain Baylian in the fight simulator!" some of them shouted as they finally recognised him.

Elian smiled, "Bingo! You guessed it!"

Thus, a battle, too terrible to behold, of unimaginable disparity between forces, unfolded. Or, in other words, the thrashing began. Within just a few moments, Elian turned all of their weapons to scrap metal, and gave them a taste of their own medicine.

Cries of "Aaah! No more!" and "I was wrong! Let me go!" emanated incessantly from the alley.

Having hit the last man standing with the hilt of his light saber, Elian surveyed the howling mass with injuries on par with Daren's, and finally stopped. He coldly declared, "I'm warning you guys. If Eloise, a woman with strength that rivals Ezart and loves Daren even more than I do, got wind of how you dared to hit Dar... heh heh!"

Upon hearing this, all of them tearfully begged "Please spare us!"

Elia snorted coldly: "Scram! I'll give you ten seconds and if you're all still within my sight, I will call Eloise and get her to continue the beating!"

The threat was enough to get the gang, who had looked to be on the brink of death just a moment ago, to jump up and scramble out of the alley in terror.

Elia dropped his menacing glare and glanced worriedly at Daren. "Are you okay, Dar?"

Daren was still sitting in the same place, his expression sluggish. Realising that he was staring intently at the twin light sabers, Elia figured that Daren was probably scared witless by them. He quickly retracted the blades and put away the hilts within the folds of his shirt.

"Dar, are you alright?" Elia crouched down, intending to examine Daren's condition.

Daren cringed, refusing to be inspected.

"I'll take you to the infirmary, okay?" Elian's hand halted, extremely concerned. Looks like Daren's in shock.

"Or do you want to go home?"

"No! Not home!" Daren shouted. He didn't want brother to see him hurt; brother would be very worried.

"Alright, alright! Not home," Elian reassured him. "Then let's go to the infirmary."

Daren nodded at first, but then immediately remembered that he couldn't let any doctor examine him, or else his condition would be revealed.

"No! I want to go to class."

"But you're hurt." Elian frowned.

"It's alright." Daren stood up, brushed the dirt off his clothes, then straightened his uniform into some semblance of neatness.

Elia kept frowning as he looked at him. From the tears in his clothes, it was easy to see the many bruises and cuts, but Dar did not want to go to the infirmary. What to do?

Why not let Eloise take care of Daren? He did not know anything about caring for someone who had been hurt physically and mentally...

Daren picked up his bag that had been thrown to the side, and dusted it off without saying anything. Elian felt this was a little strange coming from Daren.

Was the shock too much? He began to regret not coming out earlier to stop those guys.

"Dar, Are you alright...?" despite what he said, Elian had already decided that things were definitely not right.

"I'm fine. I'm going off to school now. Thanks for helping me, Elian-gege." Daren bowed in thanks to Elian, then turned and headed towards the road.

Not only was something wrong, it was very serious. Elian frowned as he dialed Eloise on his mobile phone, following Daren closely for fear that another such incident might occur again.

Daren walked slowly to school and into his classroom. He was late and he knew it.

But in the midst of such a ruckus that could overwhelm three bustling fish markets, one late student didn't attract any attention, neither from the teacher on his podium nor the students fooling around.

Forget tardiness, even those students beaten into absenteeism by Elian went unnoticed.

That's because this was class D, the legendary class where cows are put to pasture. As long as the tuition was paid, your certificate would come in the express mail even if you didn't go to the graduation ceremony. Although a diploma with a big "D" emblazoned across it wasn't of much use.

Daren hung his bag neatly beside his desk before sitting down. He looked at that mop of orange hair sprawled across the next desk. Ezart was attending school to sleep in the classroom as per usual, only waking up for combat classes.

Daren fished out his notebook and began concentrating on the lesson. He knew Elian followed him the whole way and was now gazing at him through the window, a picture of concern.

But he ignored Elian completely. He just wanted to class to end quickly, then go home to brother and Papa Avery.

Only they would never turn their backs on him. Only they will never leave him behind.

Daren's hand speedily jotted down everything the teacher said, but his gaze was dull. The notes were naturally of no interest. Normally, he could talk to Ezart even though the latter was always in a state of murderous rage after being woken up.

Boring, boring...

Oh yeah, I still have one toy I can play with.

"Xiao Ai!"

Daren dug around in his bag and found the pink heart shaped console at the very bottom. Impatiently, he pressed the "on" button.

A girl with pink hair and glasses was projected, she pouted, "Dar is so mean. You ignored me for so long!"

"Sorry. I didn't do it on purpose. Have you been waiting for me all this time?" Dar continued writing with his right hand while playing with Little Ai with his left.

I still have Little Ai, she's always been waiting for me.

"Of course!" Little Ai pouted adorably.

"You won't... betray me?"

"Of course not. Dar, what shall we do now?" Little Ai giggled and the options "Chat", "Eat" and "Study" appeared on the screen.

Daren quirked his head and decided to start from the first option. He will go through all of them once.

Elian stood outside the window observing Dar with furrowed brows. He seemed to be fine, playing on his dating game console after taking some notes.

The only change was that Dar and Ezart were behaving like complete strangers.

"What happened with Dar? Which bastard dared to hurt my adorable Dar?!"

Eloise started shouting at the distant end of the corridor, her voice preceding her arrival.

Elian rolled his eyes at her. Lucky for them Class D was so raucous that nobody took any notice. What an unfathomable class!

"He seems fine playing with his game..." Elian was bumped to the side mid sentence.

Eloise craned her neck peering through the window till she caught sight of Dar looking perfectly fine sitting on his chair. She heaved a sigh of relief.

"Dar looks like he's ok..."

"He's despondent." Eloise was interrupted mid sentence by Eli, who was slowly sashaying down the corridor.

Elian and Eloise snapped their heads towards Eli, glaring at him.

Eli ignored their glares, listening in for a second before saying, "He's

continuously repeating the phrases 'Don't abandon me. Ezart. Never was.' He's not paying attention to the game at all"

Elian was dumbfounded, "But he is actually playing the game."

Eli threw him a glance and asked, "He's playing while writing notes with a stony dull expression. Are you blind?"

Elian speechlessly observed again. It was indeed true.

"Oh my poor Dar! He's not smiling anymore! That Ezart must be bullying him!" Eloise exploded in rage and bellowed, "This won't do! I will get justice for Dar!"

With that, she jumped onto the windowsill before Elian or Eli could stop her. She pompously pointed at the sleeping Ezart and yelled, "Ezart! Come out! I will punish you in Dar's place!"

The moment the word "Ezart" left her mouth, the whole class became deadly silent, shocked that someone even dared to challenge the God of Plague. But, weren't those the three ECS students who were stealing the show in the battle simulator?

Ezart languidly raised his head, the displeasure of being woken up coupled with the dragon tattoo made him look extremely imposing. The crowd unanimously thought that a massive battle was imminently unavoidable.

Unexpectedly, Ezart spouted, "Practical combat class tomorrow. Battle

Simulator. Bring it." He flopped onto his desk and continued sleeping.

Eloise was incensed. She was just short of incinerating the whole class with the flames of fury erupting from her mouth.

Elian simply shook his head and strenuously withheld the imploding Eloise.

Eli, on the other hand, was giving Ezart an appreciative glance. He had a very straightforward mentality with no extraneous thoughts other than those that emerge from his lips.

"Dar~ Jiejie will avenge you!" Eloise yelled as she was dragged away by Elian, with Eli strolling behind.

Avenge what? Daren vacantly watched the trio depart. After staring blankly for a second, he decided to continue playing with Little Ai.

Theodore Avery was squirming uneasily at home. Although he had entered the laboratory several times, but after several near mishaps, he decided not to risk destroying his experiments. He sat in the living room watching the seconds tick by as he waited for Daren's return.

"Sigh. How am I different from a worried father?" Theodore adjusted the spectacles perched on his nose as he lamented, "I have obviously never been married, so why am I a father? And I'm even worried about my son's difficulty in making friends. I really wonder if I'll have to give my son advice on how to woo a girl in the future..."

"I'm home."

"Oh. You're back... Dar!"

Theodore sprang up immediately and rushed to Daren's side to assess him.

Very good. It looks as if it's nothing serious. Only a little listless, but at least he didn't come back with a river of tears.

Daren smiled in reply, "Yes. I'm back. Papa Avery, I'm hurt. Can you treat me?"

"Oh ok. I'll treat you... Wait a second! You're hurt?" Theodore finally realised what Daren was saying. Did he just say he was injured? The cyborg Dark Sun was injured?

Theodore was dumbstruck momentarily before screeching hysterically, "Who hurt you? Don't tell me it was those people who kidnapped Devon last time? They actually injured you. Are they really that strong?"

But the most important point was...He gulped in anticipation, "Did they leave behind any corpses? Can you give me a few to experiment on?"

It was not like he did not care about Dar! He was already standing before him in one piece which meant he was fine! In that case, he had to quickly ascertain the location of the modified humans for some body snatching before Devon showed up to destroy all traces.

Ah... it so happens that the few corpses below have already been experimented on to the brink of disintegration.

Daren shook his head in explanation, "No. I was beaten up by my classmates."

Theodore's jaw hit the ground with a thud. After a long pause he uttered, "You... your classmates are also modified humans?"

"Normal humans."

"With supernatural abilities?" Theodore was in disbelief.

Dark Sun! It was his greatest achievement which he spent seven years modifying into the strongest cyborg. Even if provided with the same laboratory, identical materials and a similar time frame, he had no guarantee that he could fashion another equally powerful robot.

Daren reiterated honestly, "Not at all."

"...They possessed the most advanced modified artillery?"

"They hit me with their fists and legs."

How is that possible... Theodore froze, on the brink of collapse.

"Is my brother back yet?" Daren nervously shook Theodore saying, "Papa Avery, treat me quickly. If he sees this when he gets back..."

...it would be Armageddon! Theodore regained his senses and dragged Daren down to the basement.

The sub-basement was Theodore's private sanctuary - his laboratory.

The basement was Daren's space. Although the distance between these two levels were equivalent to five storeys of a normal building, because the interval space was filled with cement and metal, it was still named basement 1 and 2.

For safety precautions, Devon had insisted that the distance should be far enough that "a nuclear explosion in basement 2 would not affect basement 1".

A spacious training arena, a shooting range and a personal battle simulator lay beyond the doors to basement 1. Transparent bullet proof cabinets housed guns and swords of all kinds. A weapons exhibition would paled in comparison.

In this space permeating with violence, there was a white room partitioned with clear glass filled with high tech instruments surrounding a pink operating table.

Devon: A white operating table will remind Dar of unpleasant memories. Make it pink!

Theodore's internal dialogue: Why pink? Can't it be blue?

Daren removed his long sleeve uniform upon entering the room, revealing numerous bruises on his body. He automatically lay on the operating table.

"Why is it so serious?"

Theodore was stunned speechless. Dar did not have this many injuries even after battling with the modified humans.

"Gege will see my arms, start there."

Because he used his arms to shield his head, his porcelain skin was dotted with injuries more serious than the rest. Daren raised his arms. There was virtually no area left unscathed.

"Alright."

Theodore frowned as he expertly pierced Daren with a needle-like suction device, which diligently expressed all the haemorrhage from the capillaries. It was followed by a healing serum.

Gradually, the bruises the size of a bowl shrank to the size of a finger nail.

Daren frowned, "Gege will see this..."

"We've got no choice. An injury can't heal in an instant." Theodore replied as he worked efficiently.

He shrugged, "Let's find an excuse. We'll say that there was a technical problem with your hand and I helped you fix it, hence the injuries..."

"I see. Not a bad excuse."

"Sigh. No matter how good the excuse is, the moment your incestuous brother sees that you're covered in bruises, there's no stopping him from going berserk."

Theodore sighed haplessly. He was always the first in the line of fire. His head had almost gotten used to having the BHP09 pressed against it.

Strange, that did not sound like something Dar would say...

Daren sat up from the operating table with wide eyes staring past Theodore Avery.

A chill crawled up Theodore's spine, he's done for...

"Who was it?"

Devon Solaris uttered in a voice as chilling as a freezer. The people who understand him knew that behind this freezer were flames of fury straight out of hell.

"Gege..." Daren called out hesitantly.

Devon whipped out his BHP09 and fired an unerringly accurate shot that grazed Theodore's cheek, leaving a trail of blood.

This action alone was terrifying. But, the latter's reaction amplified that. Theodore adjusted the spectacles perched on his nose, his face the serenity of one surrendered to his fate, as he continued his treatment of Daren's bruises with the suction device.

"Who was it?" Devon raged.

"It was just a fight between classmates." Theodore revealed the truth under duress, although he himself was suspicious of this truth.

"A fight between classmates?"

Devon looked at all the bruises on his younger brother, his ruby red eyes brimming with heartache, "You call this a fight between classmates? Who dared to beat you Dar? Was it that porcupine head!?"

"No! It's not Ezart! Really! He won't hurt me..." Daren suddenly stopped speaking.

"Then who was it? If you don't tell gege, I'll behead that porcupine head!"

Daren became flustered. He knew that if his brother found out who did

it, those people would not need to attend school ever again. He waved his hands about in panic, "Gege, Dar is fine. It's just a scratch. I'll be fine after Papa Avery fixes it."

Devon walked over, caressing each of didi's injury as if the bashing had been inflicted on himself.

He really should not have caused his brother such sadness... Daren lowered his head in remorse, " Gege... please don't be upset. Dar won't obediently let himself be beaten up next time."

Hearing that, Theodore revealed a perturbed expression.

Devon twitched as he asked with difficulty, "Obediently let yourself be beaten up?"

Daren started nodding before he realised that he said something that would make his brother angrier. Afraid of nodding and unable to lie, he hung his head in guilt, not meeting his brother's eyes.

"Dar, you really won't tell me?" Devon was incredibly exasperated, but being the Solaris Emperor, he managed to calm down instantly and declared with carefree ease, "No matter! I'll just kill all your classmates and transfer you to a different class tomorrow."

"No!" Daren yelled, "Gege don't kill Ezart!"

Devon quirked his head to the side elegantly in consideration and smiled, "Alright then, I'll kill everyone other than Ezart and transfer you

both to another class tomorrow."

"Ah..."

Daren thought that this was wrong, even though he never spoke to the rest, but, but... he couldn't just let innocent people be slaughtered.

Gege's in such a good mood that he's actually smiling... Looks like he really wants to kill my whole class. What to do? Don't tell me I really have to tell him who beat me up so he can only kill those few instead of the whole class?

That's not right! Those few classmates were already taught a lesson by Elian, if they were killed by my brother, then... then it would be a pity. Even though they had beaten him up, he still did not want to see them get killed...

Devon seemed calm and collected but on the inside, he was itching to get his hands on the perpetrators. Of course he would not kill the whole class, doing so would cause a great furore and draw unwanted attention on the only surviving... no the only two survivors. God knows why Dar likes that porcupine head so much! That would make it extremely difficult for Dar to conceal his identity.

The killing will have to wait till didi leaves that class!

Theodore watched the pair of brothers as he treated Dar's wounds. One of them was anxiety personified, the other was wearing a gentle smile while his eyes flashed with maliciousness, hatching plots of unimaginable

gruesomeness in his mind.

He discreetly shook his head. Sigh! The naïve Daren pitted against the devious, scheming Devon was like an infant versus a conspirator.

What to do? There's no way to stop my brother from killing my classmates? He was so anxious that his eyes were brimming with tears, and still he could not think of a solution. Why am I so stupid?

Not only did he anger Ezart by violating his taboo, he did not even know what his taboo was. Then he was beaten up by his classmates, yet he did not know why they wanted to bash him. Now his brother wanted to kill his classmates, and once again he could not think of a solution... uwaaa!

I'm a big idiot! A big idiot who doesn't know anything... His self pity broke the dam of tears.

"Dar, you better tell your big brother who beat you up... Dar?"

Dar hung his head, tears trickling down his face.

The always poised Solaris Emperor lost his composure, mouth agape, a fluster of hands and legs, unsure of whether he should wipe away Dar's tears or pat him on the shoulder.

Devon was furious at himself. Damn it! Was he crazy? He used his scheming ways on Dar and forced him to burst into tears. Did he not swear to make him happy?

Why was he causing Dar grief instead? Devon trembled as he plead, "Please don't cry... don't cry Dar. Gege was wrong. Don't cry, don't be sad and depressed."

Despite his brother's words, Dar continued to cry as he shook his head. He just could not stop the flood of tears. Plus, the tears of his long accumulated grievances gushed more rapidly after he heard his brother's apology, racking his body with sobs.

"Alright, alright! Gege won't kill your classmates. Not a single one. They will all live long and prosper ... Even if they were minced into a puddle of mulch by oncoming cars, I will get someone to drag them back from the depths of hell!"

Devon suppressed his harsh words, as long as Dar stopped being despondent, he would march to hell himself to drag those people up.

"Re... Really?" Daren sniffled while looking at Devon.

Seeing the tears swirling around Dar's black orbs, could Devon really say no? There was no room for struggle. He could only nod in acquiescence, "Really."

"Mnm. That's great..."

Daren wiped his tears and belatedly felt embarrassed for crying in front of his brother even though he was already sixteen years old.

"Bu... But Dar... You have to at least let me send someone to bash those people who hurt you, right?"

Devon requested with insatiable desire... Just the thought of the existence of people, who hurt Dar without suffering any retribution, ignited a burning rage that consumed any semblance of a human heart!

But Daren shook his head, "There's no need gege. Elian-ge has already beaten them up."

Elian-ge...Who? He dares to fight me for the title of gege! Devon's face twitched.

No! I cannot be so uncultured... He smiled, "Elian-ge... so this person called Elian (he grounded out between his teeth), he must treat you very well for you to call him that."

Pffft! What a strong stench of jealousy. Hahahaha... Theodore who had his back to Devon quivered with suppressed laughter, his face contorting with the effort as his abdomen spasmed with pain.

"Yeah. Elian-ge is a nice person. He saved me today."

Daren's face fell abruptly, "I shouldn't have ignored him. Elian-ge cares for me so much, he wanted to send me to the sick bay, and he followed me back to class, but I was so sad because Ezart was ignoring me that I didn't feel like talking."

"What?" Devon raged, "That Ezart porcupine did what to make you

sad?"

Daren blinked in confusion before realising he said something he should not have, "Ah!"

Dar! I will never dare tell you any of my secrets again. You always let the cat out of the bag without realising it... Theodore sighed internally.

"It was he who hit you right? I knew it was him! I knew it!" Devon stomped angrily around the laboratory, his mind filled with 88 forbidden ways of exacting gruesome, blood-splattering, gory vengeance.

"Eh?" Daren rushed to clarify, "No! Gege. Ezart did not hit me. It was the other classmates who hated me who did it."

Oh. So that's how it was. The other classmates who hated Dar? Devon narrowed his eyes sinisterly.

Dar, you just spilled more intel for your brother to exact his plot for revenge... Theodore haplessly pushed the spectacles perched on his nose.

"It's true. Ezart he... he said that we were not friends..." Daren lowered his head, hurt showing in his eyes.

What! It is an honour to be friends with Dar, you actually dared to say that you're not friends! Devon was going stark crazy. He wanted to harpoon the porcupine head that very instant and execute every single torture method he concocted in his mind on him.

"Gege! You're absolutely forbidden from bullying Ezart!" Daren stared at his brother, eyes filled with the determination to cry if he touched Ezart.

Damn it! Devon cursed silently while he smiled in seeming pacification, "Okay, okay! Gege won't hurt him. Don't cry alright."

To each his own object of demise. The wielder of the greatest power in the world was defeated by a few tears. Not only that, he was reduced to placating his younger brother like a procuress plying the oldest trade. Theodore was once again quivering with barely contained mirth.

Hearing his brother's confirmation, Daren's heart was set at ease. After some thought he asked, "Gege, can I ask you a question?"

"Of course you can." Devon replied warmly, "I'll answer any question you have."

"How do you become good friends with someone?" Daren asked expectantly.

Devon, the investment maniac who only had collaborators with mutual benefits but no friends for the past 10 years, revealed a pathetic expression because his didi had asked him how to befriend someone.

Hahaha... By now Theodore's stomach had started cramping on the side from all the suppressed laughter.

Devon glared menacingly at the convulsing Theodore, "Oh, why don't you ask Papa Avery instead!"

His silent laughter ceased abruptly.

Theodore, the research maniac who only came into intimate contact with another person (usually in the post mortem context, occasionally in vivo experiments) during experiments for the past 15 years, revealed a frigid expression because his child born "out of wedlock" asked him how to make friends, while his child's brother was polishing his shiny BHP09.

"Making friends involves... having meals together, going shopping together." Theodore answered with difficulty.

"Ezart and I have had meals together, and had supper once and shopped together (when he bought Little Ai), played together (Little Ai's name and appearance were decided by Ezart, so that counted). But he still said that we're not friends..." Daren was both saddened and perplexed, as he looked towards his brother and "father" expectantly.

Wait a minute! Had supper together? Devon's face twitched, Isn't supper eaten close to midnight?

"Is that so? Hahaha... Then I'll go search the encyclopaedia for you for the meaning of 'friend'." Theodore slipped upstairs immediately.

Therefore, Daren's eyes focused on his brother, the latter cursing Theodore silently while proposing a solution, "Well, I will make my subordinates investigate how to befriend someone."

With that, the almighty Solaris Emperor followed Theodore's example as he rushed upstairs to make phone calls, leaving this impossibly difficult question, which had stymied two masters of different fields, to be dealt with by minions.

Friend refers to a person with whom the interpersonal relationship has progressed to a certain stage, usually not related by blood, but of extremely genial interactions. Friends are usually honest with each other, loyal and thoughtful. They have similar personalities, tastes and interests, possibly engaging in activities together frequently. They can help each other mutually, for example, listening to each other's concerns and giving advice. For the majority, friends are trusted companions. (Theodore explained after he checked the encyclopaedia and was reminded by Daren that the microchip in his brain already had this explanation. Daren once again prevented patricide from occurring in the nick of time.)

A friend is someone who you play drinking games and pick up girls with. (Devon fired one of his innocent minions.)

So... what is a friend?

Daren still did not understand. He only wanted to go to school with Ezart, have lunch together, have supper together. Although at the beginning Ezart did not smile at him and kept asking him to go away, but in the end they got along pretty well, right?

Daren pondered about the taboo those classmates had mentioned as he walked to school. What in the world was it?

"Dar!"

Daren halted mid step, turned and blurted, "Elia-ge?"

Hearing that, the girl beside Elia revealed a pitiful expression. Daren hurriedly added, "Eloise, how are you?"

Eloise broke out into a wide smile and jumped before Daren. She caressed his face like a lecher, moving her hands back and forth. "Dar you're so cute today!"

Daren haplessly smiled. The reason for the cuteness is because you utterly destroyed my glasses...

"You're smiling Dar." Elia heaved a sigh of relief, "That's good. I was really worried that you received too much of a shock and couldn't recover from it."

To think that Elia-ge was actually worried about him. Daren apologised, "Elia-ge, I'm really sorry for ignoring you yesterday."

Elia gave a carefree smile, "No worries. I knew you were in a bad mood."

"Dar don't be upset. Eloise jiejie1 will definitely bash that Ezart for you!" Eloise thumped her chest in promise.

Daren jerked his head up, he remembered the challenge between Eloise

and Ezart yesterday and panicked a little, "Eloise, Ezart didn't bully me. It's just... just that he doesn't want to be friends with me that's all..." The more he talked the more devastated he became.

Elian and Eloise exchanged glances and saw that their hands were tied. If Dar was bullied, it was easily taken care of. All they had to do was to beat those people up.

But they could not possibly force someone to become friends with Dar.

That's right! Elian-ge, Eloise and Eli looked like they were good friends. So he could ask Elian-ge what a friend is! Daren looked at the two of them in anticipation, "Elian-ge, how can one be considered a friend?"

Elian furrowed his brows. This question has no model answer.

But Eloise replied effortlessly, "Needless to say, it's the person who you tell everything to, do everything with, go drinking with when unhappy (Elian gave her a sharp look: Don't lead him astray)... eat with! Of course if he's not in the mood, you can look for me too."

"Must you tell him everything?" Daren hesitated. But he could not talk about Dark Sun...

Elian frowned, in essence, Eloise was right but he still felt that there was something missing...

Daren dazedly thought about Eloise's definition of a friend, someone who he could tell everything to, do everything with, eat supper with when unhappy. This kind of friend was something to look forward to!

"Dar? Dar? Elia, is Dar spacing out?" Eloise fluttered her lashes and squealed, "But this dreamy look is even more adorable!"

Just then, Daren raised his head, his dark eyes glistening with resolve!

Seeing that, Elia began praying that Eloise's words would not cause a major disaster...

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter cv2c5 END \*\*\*\*\*

1姐姐 (jiejie) – elder sister. Can also be used for slightly elder females not related by blood.

Eclipse Hunter v02c06

Sixth Hunt - Demon Friend

Translator: Aoi

Proofreader:: Wolfjackle, Wryn, Noobzilla

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Demons never cease

Searching for comrades;

Humans never cease

Becoming demons.

Ezart sauntered lazily into class, late as usual. There was a pause in the usual chaos as everyone watched him approach. After determining that Ezart's mood was fairly average, the room returned to its disarray.

Ezart strutted over to his seat, carelessly tossed his bag onto the floor, and began to do what he always did during morning classes: sleep.

However, Daren, who had been sitting in his seat waiting for Ezart, chose that exact moment to suddenly stand up and slam both hands down on Ezart's desk, making sleep impossible.

This caused Ezart to lift his head and look at him with indifference.

The class fell silent again, and everyone froze in their various poses with their mouths agape as if they'd seen a ghost.

"Get your hands off my desk, or you'll end up in the hospital," said Ezart in a cold voice.

Daren, however, did not back down. Instead, he sternly replied, "Ezart, come with me. I have something to ask you... and something to tell you!"

What's this idiot doing... Ezart sized Daren up suspiciously. Does he honestly think he won't get beaten up?

It was as if Daren knew what he was thinking since he brought it up himself, "Let's go to the roof. If you still want to hit me after you've listened to what I have to say, you can do it all you want up there."

Oh? He's even prepared to be hit? That kind of courage at least made it worth listening to a bunch of nonsense. Ezart stood up and easily agreed, "Okay; to the roof."

Daren silently breathed a deep sigh of relief at Ezart's reply. He had been really worried that Ezart wouldn't even go to the roof with him!

Ezart followed Daren at his usual slow and lazy pace. Right before leaving the classroom, he casually turned to address the class, "Anyone who dares to eavesdrop on us had better be prepared to go to the hospital with him!"

Then, the two of them left the classroom: one behind another; one in a hurry, the other leisurely strolling behind.

After a while, the startled crowd in the classroom finally recovered. Someone said blankly, "I didn't think that nerd could be so brave..."

No one else was on the roof. Then again, it was class time and the roof was off limits to students.

After Daren reached the roof, he didn't even turn to face Ezart. He simply dropped his bag on the floor and stood there, motionless.

Just before Ezart completely lost his patience, Daren spoke, "Ezart, I

don't know which taboo of yours I've violated.."

"And I don't know why you're mad, why you don't want to come to school with me, or why you won't let me talk to you."

Daren sudden turned around and yelled, with a determined expression, "But I won't follow suit! I don't want it to end like this. I want to be friends—friends that walk to and from school together, eat together, hang out together, have midnight snacks together!"

Daren's outburst left Ezart speechless. All he could say was, "Are you an idiot...?"

Daren's expression gradually transformed. The determined look and naïve nerd aura were gone, now replaced by an unfeeling expression. His child-like face seemed to suddenly take on a mature appearance.

"Hey! Dar, what are you doing?" Ezart asked, surprised.

Dark Sun ripped off his student uniform, revealing the red shirt and jeans. Then he reached down to take boots, which looked to be made of rubber, out of his bag along with a silver visor..

After he put the visor on, he asked Ezart in a tone that betrayed no emotion, "Haven't you always wanted to fight me? Let's fight now."

Dark Sun! That idiot Dar... is actually Dark Sun?!

Damn! What kind of situation is this? Ezart was unable to react and resorted to staring blankly at the mysterious person, Dark Sun, who, just a moment ago, had been the childish Dar.

But at that moment, Dark Sun took the initiative by throwing a relatively slow punch to remind Ezart that their battle had begun.

Ezart was in such a daze that he only realized what was happening when the punch was inches from his face, and was barely able to dodge it.

"My name is Dark Sun, currently nine years old."

What? Ezart avoided Dark Sun's kick.

"I'm a cyborg; born after Daren Solaris' father locked him in a laboratory when he was seven."

Daren Solaris...? Isn't he Daren Avery? As their battle went on, Ezart continued to dodge Dark Sun's attacks while getting more and more confused. Are Dar and Dark Sun the same person or not? Why does it sound like they are two different people?

"Dark Sun is the ultimate bodyguard designed to only follow his master's orders, who also happens to be Daren Solaris' older brother." Dark Sun's voice was disinterested as if he were merely reporting some unrelated incident instead of the story of his life.

Ezart couldn't hold it in anymore and counter attacked with heavy

punches, yelling, "What about Dar? Then what is Dar?"

"Daren Solaris is... a normal boy who had been locked up by his father for seven years until he was eventually saved by his older brother. He didn't know anything. and all he wanted to do is follow the orders his brother gave him: be a normal kid, go to school, make good friends, be happy..."

Right then, Dark Sun's punch landed on the roof, leaving behind a large dent...

"But he doesn't think going to school is fun at all."

"The only time he is happy going to school is when he walks to and from school with Ezart. He was at his happiest the time he had the midnight snacks with Ezart."

What...?

Before Ezart could make sense of those words, he received a heavy punch from Dark Sun. Even with his strong body, he couldn't withstand the blow and doubled over in pain, leaving him vulnerable to Dark Sun's next move.

"What do you have against him? Tell me, or I will kill you."

Suddenly, the nails on Dark Sun's right hand extended and his eyes, black as the night, held the intent to kill. If Ezart refused, Dark Sun really would kill him. He would kill the man who made Daren miserable; who

made him disobey his master's order to "be happy".

.....

What's up with those nails? Ezart knelt on the floor holding his stomach. And how did Dar's thin arms exert such force?

However, those questions could be asked later. The important thing now was that Dark Sun was approaching, and it looked like he really would kill him!

But... Dar really hadn't been trying to use money to have himself protected. Ezart was sure of it. With this kind of power, who has the right to protect him?!

"You won't say?" By now, Dark Sun was right in front of Ezart. He continued unfeelingly, "Then I'll kill you."

"Dar, you idiot!" bellowed Ezart.

Dark Sun's movements stopped.

Ezart slowly got to his feet as if he couldn't see those deadly claws. He spat out some blood and yelled at Dark Sun, "Who gives money to their friends?! Between friends, money isn't a concern! Don't you understand?"

"Don't...understand..." Dark Sun's icy expression disappeared as quickly

as it had appeared. Daren took off the visor, his face showing obvious confusion.

"Dar? It's you, right?" asked Ezart a little uncertainly. By the change in expression, it seemed that the idiotic Dar was back.

Holy shit! He'd much rather see Dar's dumb expression any day than to ever have to see Dark Sun's lifeless look again.

Daren nodded, and asked, unhappily, "Ezart are you mad because I wanted to give you money to help pay for your tuition? But if you had money you wouldn't have to fight in the arena you hate, right? So why did you get angry?"

Ezart buried his face in his hands. Has this guy been living in a cave...? Wait, didn't Dark Sun say that Dar had been locked up by his father since he was seven?

"When were you rescued by your brother?" blurted out Ezart.

Daren tilted his head as he counted. Then he replied, "One month and eighteen days ago."

He has been locked up from the time he was seven until just over a month ago... Ezart finally understood why this guy didn't know anything about the ways of the world; he was practically a child!

God! He was arguing with a guy whose mental age was probably not yet ten?

That thought gave Ezart the urge to bang his head against a wall.

"Why did your father lock you up and what's up with your nails? What in the world is Dark Sun? You guys are the same person, right?"

He felt exhausted and had to sit down. He might as well ask all the questions now and prevent a major misunderstanding later.

Daren carefully observed Ezart's expression. Has he...forgiven me?

But he could not make out anything on Ezart's face other than his normal bored expression. He could not decipher anything and had to ask, "Ezart, are you still angry with me?"

Be angry at a ten-year-old kid? A queer expression settled over Ezart's face. Embarrassed, he replied, "I wasn't mad. But in the future, don't talk about giving me money. I hate being bought."

"Oh... Then I won't give you any more money."

Daren began to cheer up a bit, but he was still somewhat concerned. Even though Ezart wasn't angry anymore, he never said that he still wanted to be friends...

"Mm."

"Then I can still walk to and from school with you, right?"

"Yeah."

"And I can still talk to you, right?"

"Yes!"

"And...and, we can eat midnight snacks together, right?"

"O. K."

"So we're good friends, right?"

Ezart suddenly sat up straight, planning on teaching this chatterbox a lesson, but as soon as he looked up, he saw those eager eyes...

This brat... Ezart impatiently replied, "Yes, yes, yes! Okay? You're really annoying! Just hurry up and answer my questions."

Daren was so happy he nearly jumped up and cheered. It was great. Eloise was right—as long as you told your friend everything, you'd be great friends! Ezart was now his best friend!

He was wondering where he and Ezart would eat their midnight snacks that night when he suddenly got a knuckle punch on the head, followed by the sound of Ezart gritting his teeth, "Are you going to tell me or not?"

Aaah shoot, Ezart's getting angry! Daren quickly began to explain his past, "M-my father hated me because my mother died giving birth to me..."

Ezart leisurely laid down with his head on top of his hands and listened as Daren describe his past as if he were telling a story...

"... Finally, my brother rescued me. Now, my older brother, Papa Avery, and I live at home."

After a moment of silence, Ezart asked, "Your brother really loves you, right? He doesn't treat you like a robot bodyguard?"

Daren answered without hesitation, "Gege loves me the most and hates it when I'm in the form of Dark Sun. Last time, he even got mad at me when I went to save him!"

Ezart mumbled a "hmm" and said, "That's good..."

"Dar! Where are you? Did that jerk Ezart bully you~~ Oh my Dar!"

A shocked expression spread across both Daren and Ezart's faces at the same time. Eloise was the only person whose voice could be heard from hundreds of meters away.

Ezart glanced at Daren and exclaimed, "Your clothes!"

Daren looked down; he was still wearing his red shirt... Oh no!

By now, the sound of Eloise's strong and speedy footsteps had almost reached the roof. Daren quickly grabbed his clothes from the ground, but didn't have time to put them on. Panicking, he grabbed his entire bag and hid behind the water tower on the roof.

Daren had just gotten himself out of sight when he recalled Eli's mind reading ability. He quickly switched to Dark Sun's emotionless mode.

Eloise forced open the metal door to the roof with a bang. She stormed in like a demon yelling with rage, "Ezart! Don't you dare bully Dar~~"

Ezart lazily sat up, "Why would I bully him?"

"You!"

Eloise finally paid attention to their surroundings. Weird! Why is Ezart the only one here? She was sure she had heard the people in class D say Ezart and Daren were talking it out on the roof! It's obvious. Daren's so cute, so gentle, so innocent, how could he hope to talk anything out with Ezart, the violent jerk?! Nooo! I wonder if Daren's adorable face has been beaten into a pulp...

"Where's Dar?" asked Eloise.

At that moment, two others slowly climbed up behind her: Elian and Eli.

"Eloise, I don't think Ezart would hit Dar. Don't be so unreasonable."

suggested Elian with a smile.

But, in your heart, you're full of even more rage than Eloise... thought Eli.

"He went home." said Ezart casually.

"You're lying!" Eloise reflexively shouted before she continued the interrogation. "Your classmates said you came here with him to negotiate. How could he have gone home...? Unless...! You already threw him off the building! Oh god, my Dar!"

She immediately ran to the side of the building, climbed up the wire fence, and looked down, searching for a broken Dar.

"Then can you please tell us where Dar is?"

The smile on Elian's face became more pronounced as he questioned Ezart in a gentle and polite manner. However, Eli, who was standing right next to him, backed up several steps, as if he couldn't stand being too close to Elian.

Ezart stood up slowly, and replied impatiently, "I said he went home; can't you understand?"

Elian clenched his fists tighter, and asked again, slowly, emphasizing every word, "Where. Is. Dar!?"

Unfortunately, Ezart wasn't someone who could be intimidated. He

merely laughed coldly and repeated his answer, "Home."

Elian's smile widened, but his face was menacing and he gave off a frightening aura. A closer look would reveal that his hands were already at the hilts of his double sabres.

"Elian, he..." Eloise was in a panick. She rarely saw Elian like this. Wasn't he supposed to be calm and composed?

Eli backed away further from Elian and explained to Eloise, "Just now he was very worried about Dar, and now he's become extremely angry, no, he's beyond furious!"

Beyond furious?! Eloise turned to look at Elian. His smile had become terrifying, and she instinctively backed up a few steps until she was standing next to Eli.

"Elian looks so scary. I should just leave Ezart to him, I'll go find Dar." Eloise uttered and immediately turned to leave... Ah!

"What are you doing, Eli? Let go of my collar. I'm going to find Dar..."

"You want to run away, don't you?"

Eli had grabbed Eloise's collar tightly with both hands and had slowly turned to face her. Half his face was shrouded in shadows, his voice icy, "You want to leave me behind to face a destructive Elian alone?"

"..." Eloise could not even think of a comeback.

"Don't forget that we're partners. Would you want me to give you misleading information during battle?"

Eloise howled hopelessly, as if it was the end of the world, "Aaaah Eli, let me go. A furious Elan is too powerful and too terrifying. I don't wanna stay! Help!"

The furious Elan is powerful and terrifying?

After hiding behind the water tower, Dark Sun had planned on jumping off the building and leaving. Especially since Ezart had covered for him by lying, he had planned to go along with it and actually go home. However, Eloise's words stopped him in his tracks.

Really powerful, huh...

Dark Sun's desire to face strong fighters grew in his mind... or rather in the chip within his brain. Instinctively, he took a step out from behind the water tower.

No! Ezart even lied for me. I can't let him down! shouted Daren in his head.

Dark Sun's foot slowly retreated...

But at that moment, Eli suddenly shouted, "Eloise, there's someone

behind the water tower!"

As soon as the words left his mouth, Eloise gave the water tower a flying kick. She put all her strength into it, and broke the entire base of the tower. Large amounts of water surged out of the tower as it toppled backwards before collapsing with a loud boom.

Flustered and exasperated, Elian yelled, "Damn, what if it's Dar..."

Eli suddenly interrupted Elian as he stared directly at the back of the tower, "I can barely hear his thoughts... I've only met one person like this."

The stream of water slowly thinned, and the dust gradually settled. Out of the cloud, a tall and lanky silhouette appeared in front of the crowd—silver hair, similarly coloured visor, red shirt, skinny jeans, and boots.

"Dark Sun!"

Upon seeing him, Elian chuckled coldly. He looked at Ezart and commented, "Interesting! You do know Dark Sun."

Ha! I also just found out I know Dark Sun... Ezart scratched his head, but didn't bother explaining. Just why is this idiot Dar still here? All my efforts to hide his identity were wasted.

"Hey! Dar really went home. You'll see him again tomorrow as good as new." Ezart really did not want to continue arguing.

"Then why did he go home?" Elia sneered in disbelief, "It's still class time; Dar is a very hard working student and wouldn't skip without a reason."

Ezra was speechless. He really could not come up with a good reason for a good student like Dar to go home.

"The young master went home at the request of the master."

Everyone stared blankly at the one who had spoken: Dark Sun.

"Who's this 'young master' you speak of?" asked Elia, a little hesitantly.

"Young master Daren Avery," Dark Sun replied blankly.

Of course, it was just a lie to help Ezra out. Dark Sun's mind had concluded, after their past several encounters, that Eli's mind-reading ability would not be able to detect the lie. After all he could not read Dark Sun's thoughts since Dark Sun did not really have thoughts. He just had the microchip to help him decide on the best tactical solution for any situation.

"Dar is your young master?" exclaimed Eloise. "Does that mean you're not a student and you're only here to protect Dar? You're Dar's bodyguard?"

"I'm not obliged to explain my job to you," Dark Sun stonily replied.

With a bodyguard like Dark Sun, even Ezart can't hurt Dar! This calmed Elian down and he was finally able to fully grasp the situation now that he was no longer worrying.

Ah! The Dark Sun that they'd been searching all over for on the headmaster's orders had finally appeared!

"Eloise, Eli, surround him!" ordered Elian immediately as he returned to his senses.

The two responded immediately. Each took up their position and formed a triangle with Dark Sun stuck in the center.

Dark Sun did not move an inch and allowed himself to be surrounded. He had planned on fighting Elian anyway.

The sudden change in the situation left Ezart scratching his head. Should he help Dar, or not? Elian was strong; Ezart knew that from personal experience, but compared to Dar... He had no idea. He had never fought Dar before.

I must spar with Dar regularly in the future... Ha! Never imagined that Dar would turn out to be Dark Sun. This isn't half bad!

Dar just standing still like that definitely means he wants to fight Elian! Ezart decided that he would just observe from the sidelines.

After making up his mind, Ezart moved to the side of the building and leaned against the wire fence, leisurely watching the show.

By this point, Elian's twin sabers were already unsheathed and he had taken a stance which enabled fast reflexes. He declared, "Dark Sun, the headmaster of YeLan Academy wishes to meet you. We can avoid this battle if you agree to come with us. If you disagree, well, we will have to take you by force!"

Even though he issued the challenge, Elian was truly hoping that Dark Sun would just agree to go with them peacefully. Learning that Dark Sun was Dar's bodyguard made him lose any desire to fight him since it felt like a betrayal towards Dar.

After a moment of silence, Dark Sun asked, "What does he want me for?"

"The headmaster didn't give us a reason... But by the looks of it, he probably wants you to join the ECS so you can work for him," answered Elian honestly.

"Tell him I only take orders from my master."

His words made Elian sigh. "Then you aren't willing to see the headmaster?"

"No," answered Dark Sun simply.

"Then we must fight." Elian didn't waste words on unnecessary conversation; Dark Sun might be Dar's bodyguard, but it had already been decided that if an agreement couldn't be reached, a battle was the

only solution.

"Yes," agreed Dark Sun curtly.

Even had he been willing to see the headmaster, this fight between Dark Sun and Elian was inevitable. His instincts were urging him to fight this strong opponent so he could become stronger and reach his full potential to carry out all of his master's commands... even if the said commands had nothing to do with battle.

"How about we make a deal," asked Elian, flashing a charming smile. "If I win, you come with me to see the headmaster. If I lose, I'll give up the mission. If you agree, I'll tell Eloise and Eli not to interfere with our battle, but you'll have to promise not to run away in the middle of it."

"I won't run away. We can fight one on one or three on one." Since his only goal was to become stronger, Dark Sun didn't really care who he fought. Being surrounded might even be better. As for losing... that possibility never even crossed his mind.

Elian might be very strong, but no matter how strong he was, he was still human!

As for Dark Sun... half of his body was well beyond normal human boundaries.

Still, Dark Sun didn't underestimate him. He could see how poised Elian's stance was as he held his twin light sabres; how natural it seemed, as if they were simply extensions of his arms.

He must be very adept with those weapons.

Although, there was a weapon that Dark Sun was just as proficient with, *i.e.* the Reaper's Scythe, since he wasn't planning on killing Elian, there wasn't any need to use it. As long as he...

His nails flashed a cold metallic light as they suddenly extended.

... had this!

Everyone froze when caught sight of the nails that had extended almost ten centimeters and to top it off, had distinct luster of a blade. One couldn't help but swallow in fear.

"What an interesting weapon." remarked Elian, the most calm among them. He merely admired the nails. Dark Sun cut to the chase. He put one hand in front of his chest while the other remained dangling. The stance was simple, but allowed him to quickly respond to any situation.

Elian also had his own battle stance. His right arm was poised by his waist while his left was raised high above his head. One of the blades was positioned upright, level with his chest; the other was set to strike from above at any moment.

"Left handed?" asked Dark Sun disinterestedly.

He noticed so quickly? Elian smiled and replied, "Yes."

Dark Sun instinctively realized that the blade held by Elian's right hand, was positioned mostly for defense rather than offense, whereas, the left hand, held high above his head, seemed poised to strike. Since the dominant hand is naturally stronger than the other, it only made sense to use it mainly for attacking.

Dark Sun himself, however, was ambidextrous. His arms were moderated so that there was no difference in strength. Elian and Dark Sun faced one other. A calm, almost relaxed, atmosphere surrounded them. Both knew well that it was futile to remain tense.

There was no sound on the roof except for the whistling of the wind.

"Are they going to fight or not?" whispered Eloise. She was already bored of waiting, and decided to bother Eli, who was standing next to her.

Eli replied softly, "They're waiting for the moment the opponent shows his weakness... At least, Elian is."

"Looking for what weakness? They're both so strong, how can they have a weakness in their battle stance?" Eloise said impatiently.

Eloise's words seemed to affect the two fighters, however, Elian still didn't move. His fighting style was more suited to reaction rather than action.

"I'm attacking first."

Dark Sun announced. Without wasting any more time, the red figure shot forward like a streak of lightning. Elian concentrated on Dark Sun's figure, despite the glare off those nails that kept obscuring his vision, and moved only when they were a meter apart.

The light sabre in his right hand flashed to the rhythm of Dark Sun's attacks, completely blocking them. The one in his left hand struck mercilessly as Dark Sun sought to attack him from the left.

With Dark Sun's strength and the durability of his nails, grabbing a blade in midair was nothing. However, Elian was wielding sabers of condensed light energy which would be damaging if touched.

Therefore, Dark Sun could only evade. With superhuman speed and impeccable grace, Daren had to jump and twist his body in midair to avoid the light saber's pincer attack.

Elian didn't miss a beat and relentlessly carried on with his attacks. He was clearly an experienced and competent member of the ECS to be unmoved by Dark Sun's impossible evasion.

Suddenly, all that the spectators could see were flashes of blue light, as if Elian was holding two rings instead of the curved light sabres.

Dark Sun's movements, however, were much more complex and unpredictable. Even against the pincer attacks of the light sabres, the inability to come into contact with them, and the absence of a long-ranged weapon, Dark Sun did not sustain a single scratch.

Although the opportunity to attack had not manifested, Dark Sun was not anxious. He knew, that as the fight prolonged, Elian would become fatigued five times faster than he did. This fatigue would affect Elian's movements, whereas only physical damage could affect his own. As long as his body was uninjured, he could fight on till death by ignoring fatigue and hunger.

Humans had to stop fighting due to exhaustion, but non-humans would fight to the death because of an order. Their destinies were incomparable.

"Dar...Dark Sun's movements are kind of similar to Shain Baylian," muttered Ezart as he watched. It was the truth. Dark Sun had uploaded Shain's skills into his microchip and seamlessly integrated them into his own moves during battle. This was Dark Sun's strength. Since he was a fast learner, the more he fought, the stronger he became.

"Watching this is making me dizzy; it's all circles." Eloise complained. She could only see two constantly spinning rings, even when she closed her eyes.

Eli was impressed, "So fast; now this is a true expert. I probably would have been beaten even with my mind reading abilities. I would've lost even before I got a chance read his mind. An expert's moves are akin to reflexes."

Despite the speed at which his hands were moving, Elian's mind had no problem keeping up with the battle. However, he quickly realized that at this rate he would fall before Dark Sun. He did not like the idea of losing

due to fatigue.

So, he immediately changed his approach; he would take the offensive and strike down Dark Sun!

Dark Sun, on the other hand, did not care how he won, so he took his time to fight. His only goal was to incorporate his opponent's strengths to achieve his goal of becoming stronger.

But now he noticed that Elian had increased his tempo. His brain immediately analysed that Elian had gone on the offensive.

Then, how should he respond?

The microchip provided him the best approach: pull away from the enemy and throw heavy objects from afar. This was the easiest way to win without the Reaper's Scythe.

And if Devon had not activated Dark Sun's emotional switch, he probably would have done just that.

But right now, Dark Sun knew that this was not the approach he should take against someone like Elian who had the dual identity as a friend and an enemy.

Then what should he do?

While he was considering his options, Elian's light sabres formed an X

and snapped at him. He was trapped. His only option was to sacrifice his arm. Two streaks of seared flesh instantly appeared. Elian did not rejoice at the successful attack and used the opportunity to press his advantage. He pushed off the ground and shot towards Dark Sun, his light sabres aimed right at his face.

Elian locked eyes with Dark Sun, and silent words passed between them. It was as if he was asking, Are you just going to die like that, Dark Sun? I don't think so right? If you were, you wouldn't even be worth taking to see the headmaster.

If it's unavoidable, then...

Plasma strands activate!

Shielded by the visor, Elian did not discover the strings of digits scrolling through Dark Sun's midnight orbs.

"Plasma weapons" were cutting edge technology. It was to be the focus of future weapons development. Compared to traditional guns, plasma guns did not require bullets; they only had to be recharged with energy. The guns could even be adjusted to discharge varying amounts of power. Metal such as steel could be liquefied effortlessly by plasma knives, and the elemental properties absorbed for further enhancement.

The only technological weakness at the moment was that plasma guns consumed too much energy. One energy cartridge could only power six shots. It was drastically limited as compared to traditional guns which could fire 50 to 100 rounds.

But, blade prototypes did not have this hurdle. Plasma blades used for battle could last up to 6 to 8 hours without any problems.

The two light sabres Elia wielded were top quality; they could last in a constant battle for over 12 hours, non-stop.

Since very few humans could fight for over ten hours, the blade prototypes have progressed significantly compared to guns. Nevertheless, there was one small problem: they were extremely expensive. They were so expensive that an average person hardly saw one, let alone afford it.

Obviously, the group of scientists who originally designed Dark Sun did not neglect this future weapon development and hid a plasma weapon in his hair!

Dark Sun's short silver hair suddenly extended and the long strands swirled, a rendition of a male version of the Bride with White Hair<sup>1</sup>. The strands converged on the two light sabres, binding them tightly and rendering them useless.

Elia was suddenly a fly in a spider web, face to face with a demonic non-human with silver hair whipping around in a frenzy. His pupils dilated. No matter how calm he had been, he did not get the time to react.

At that moment, Dark Sun grabbed Elia's shoulders. His 10 cm long steel nails dug into flesh, forcing the latter to let out a grunt of pain, his face becoming as white as a sheet.

Dark Sun then kicked Elian in the abdomen, sending him flying several meters.

Dark Sun had not gone easy on the kick and it left Elian lying on the floor, unable to get back up.

"Elian!" Eloise and Eli hurried over to help him up while an eye on Dark Sun in case he suddenly attacked.

"Okay, you really are too strong," Elian finally said with a smile after catching his breath. "It looks like I can't force you to go."

"You're strong too, really strong."

Dark Sun said honestly as he withdrew the plasma strands. His long hair returned to its normal length.

For a modified human like Elian to have been able to hold out against the cyborg Dark Sun, and force him into utilising his plasma strands, no other word besides "strong" could describe him.

Elian smiled. He did not need Eli's mind-reading to know that Dark Sun sincerely thought he was strong.

"Are there any students stronger than you in the ECS?" This was what Dark Sun wanted to know the most.

"You still want to fight other people? You're frightening enough with

your hair and nails. I really don't know what kind of supernatural powers they are." He smiled bitterly, but still responded to the question, "It also depends on what you mean by strong. In a way, Eli's ability is more attention-grabbing than mine."

"In terms of battle," Dark Sun said simply.

Elian contemplated this for a while, then said, "There is a guy... But if your fighting abilities are only your nails and speed, you can't beat him."

"Name?"

"Shi. No one knows his real name, but the headmaster calls him Shi."

At that moment, Eli interrupted, "You're wrong, Elian. What the headmaster says isn't 'Shi', but 'Sin'!"

Elian stared back blankly. I see. "Sin", huh? It really is a suitable name for that guy...

Dark Sun's phone rang just as Dark Sun was about to ask where to find this Sin. There were only two people in the world who would call him: Devon Solaris and Theodore Avery.

And those two people were more important than anything else, so, without hesitation, Dark Sun tossed the thought of Sin aside, and picked up the phone.

"Gege..."

Dark Sun's mask slipped a little back to Daren, but he suddenly remembered the mind-reading Eli, and stayed as the heartless Dark Sun. He walked off to the side to explain his situation to Devon.

Seeing that his opponent left to answer a phone call, Elia collapsed onto the ground. He wondered what would happen if the headmaster were to send Sin to capture Dark Sun. He probably won't, right? The headmaster should know that if he sent Sin, the headmaster would end up finding someone in a bodybag.

In the ECS, Sin's ruthlessness was infamous. Whenever he fought, a life ended. Even though he was so strong, he still hadn't graduated because the headmaster hardly gave him any missions. Unless it was an assassination request...

"That was brilliant! I'd love to fight you again!"

Ezart came to Elia's side and heartily slapped him on the back so hard that the latter couldn't help but laugh bitterly. That really hurt and I'm already seriously injured...

"If you want to fight Elia, you have to get through me first!" Eloise was more than a little put off by this Ezart guy whose fighting style was very similar to her own.

"Then let's fight right now." Ezart was very eager. The amazing battle between Dar and Elia had gotten him pumped up for a good fight.

"Okay!" Even though he got on her nerves, Eloise had to admit that Ezart's straightforwardness in battle was quite to her taste.

The two eager fighters were just about to start when unknown people climbed onto the roof. Without hesitation they fired upon Dark Sun, who was still on the phone, with heavy artillery.

Suddenly, the whole roof was filled with the roar of machine guns and the occasional explosion from the powerful firearms.

The sudden and relentless attack caught even Dark Sun offguard. Though he managed to jump out of the way within a split second, he couldn't avoid all the shots. Fortunately, he was able to avoid the blasts from the bazookas, thereby preserving his vital organs. There was no time for him to counterattack; all he could do was determine the enemies aim, and avoid the shots with his incredible speed.

"Eli?!"

Elian shouted in the midst of the roaring gunshots. There were so many people hidden nearby, yet the mind-reading Eli hadn't given any warnings. This was a clear dereliction of duty!

But Eli was even more surprised than Elian. He stuttered, "Th-they... are like Dark Sun. I can't read any thoughts!"

Elian stood up immediately. Although he was seriously injured, it wasn't enough to keep him lying on the ground obediently when faced with real

danger.

Ezart immediately noticed that these people were only attacking Dar. Their target is Dar?

Dark Sun was facing so many attacks he could barely fight back. Their speed wasn't much slower than his and the powerful bazookas kept him constantly on the defensive. Not to mention he was greatly outnumbered by the enemy who also had excellent teamwork...

No! This isn't teamwork; it looks like their battle formation was configured by a computer.

That was when he noticed that their bodies were mostly modified, like his... but it was clearly inferior work. The modified metallic arms and legs were exposed without any coverings while the backs of their heads were just half spheres!

"Are these robots?" gasped Eloise as she voiced the question everyone else was thinking.

Ezart suddenly joined the fray and knocked over one of the robots while yelling, "Who cares what they are! They're Dark Sun's enemies!"

They are Dark Sun's enemies... But man, we don't really have any friendship with Dark Sun to speak of. Elan laughed bitterly.

"What's with that look? Isn't Dark Sun's enemy Dar's enemy?" Ezart yelled. He realized that while these robots might not be stronger than

Dark Sun, they could not be underestimated. It would be better if he could get Elian & co's assistance.

Right! Dark Sun is Dar's bodyguard... the ECS members realised. They evaluated the situation and came to the conclusion that these people may not be targeting Dark Sun, but rather Dar, his charge.

After realising this, Eloise joined Ezart without a second thought, and began pummeling the robots! As her comrade, Eli had no choice but to join the battle. If he didn't, he'd be left without a partner after Eloise was transformed into a holey honeycomb by the guns and cannons.

Elian, on the other hand, was much calmer. He coolly observed and assessed the robots abilities. He figured that in his current condition, he could handle a single robot. Ezart would also be able to take one, while Eloise and Eli, even without his mind reading abilities, could probably take on a third.

There are six of them... Can Dark Sun deal with three by himself?

Elian worriedly glanced at Dark Sun. He hadn't been severely injured during their battle, but since the robots attacked he had received several gunshot wounds...

Now Dark Sun was just dodging and... talking on the phone!

Suddenly he didn't feel like slicing up the robots. Better to slice up Dark Sun instead! Infuriating! But since he's so laid back, it probably means that Dark Sun doesn't see these robots as worthy opponents, right?

Either way, I'll just help for Dar's sake! Elian shook his head, took out his light sabres, picked a robot, and began fighting.

Meanwhile, Dark Sun, who was talking on the phone, wasn't feeling relaxed at all!

But his brother, on the other end of the phone, was about to explode in fury.

"Who? Who dared to send them to attack you! I will destroy him. I will flay his corpse. Even if he is already dead, I will send him to Theodore's laboratory to prevent his reincarnation!"

Being sent to Papa Avery's lab means no reincarnation? Well, thinking about it, it really would be impossible for those shredded bodies drenched in all sorts of chemicals to reincarnate. Daren wasn't sure if he should laugh or cry.

"Gege, these people are probably from the same group as the last set of modified humans. Just cheaper models, it seems."

Out of the corner of his eye, Daren saw that the others had joined the battle. Ezart even rolled his eyes at him when he saw he was on the phone. But they had really lifted some of his burden by joining. Not just the physical burden, but also the emotional one. He suddenly felt as if he had four more good friends fighting alongside him.

"Oh? That's great! Kyle is close to figuring out who those people were.

Hehehe. Dare to challenge me? I want you to die a horrible death and never rest in peace!" The man on the other end seemed to have dived into hatching the most terrifying and bloodthirsty plot of revenge of all time...

But, nothing is more important than the danger Dar is in. Devon returned to his senses and asked gravely, "Dar, can you handle them?"

"Yes." Hearing the master's question, Dark Sun returned in a flash, dodging the string of bullets fired by the enemy.

Naturally, Devon also heard those hair-raising gunshots on the other end of the phone. But he knew that if he sent people to help Dar, they wouldn't be of much help. Instead, they might expose the fact that Dark Sun was one of Solaris Emperor's men which would most likely bring even more danger to Dar.

Taking these into account, Devon could only reiterate, "Be careful, Dar. Don't get hurt!"

"Uh..." Daren looked down at the bullet wounds on his legs and arms . He didn't know how to reply; it was already too late.

"You're hurt? You're hurt, aren't you?"

His brother's sounded as if he was going berserk. Daren even had to pull the phone away to prevent himself from going deaf from his brother's furious screams.

"Gege, I need to go fight, or I'll get even more injuries. When I go home I'll get Papa Avery to treat me. Good luck at work!"

With that, Daren hung up, because if his brother continued to listen to the gunshots, he might decide to come and personally nuke the people who dared to shoot his brother.

He was also keenly aware of the several glares Elian had shot at him. He felt very sorry for making the others fight the enemy while he was on the phone.

After he put away his phone, Dark Sun unleashed his full potential. His nails extended like sharp blades. He moved as fast as the wind, zig zaging through enemy bullets. He dashed before one of his assailants, quickly ducked to the side, somersaulted and appeared instantly behind the adversary. He mercilessly stabbed both sides of the enemy's spine with his steel nails. Its bones broke with a crunch.

Whoever saw him felt chills at the sight before them, especially Elian, who had just fought with Dark Sun. A shiver ran down his spine.

Oh right, I think Papa Avery said something about wanting a few modified human corpses... Wouldn't he be even more pleased with live specimens? Daren's thoughts gradually emerged.

"Avery, modified humans?"

Coincidentally, Eli had been focusing on Dark Sun. He had heard a couple of phrases and had unconsciously said them out loud.

Dark Sun whipped around to look in Eli's direction.

Oh no! Had he heard something he shouldn't have? What's worse, the enemy was aware of it! Eli backed up several steps in Elian's direction, afraid Dark Sun might want to silence him forever.

However, regardless of whether he wanted to kill Eli, Dark Sun was evidently more preoccupied with the enemies who were attacking him. he was constantly flitting in between several of them, at such speed that his enemies could not even keep track of his movements. Dark Sun proceeded to sequentially break the enemies limbs, but did not injure them fatally.

"He's... being a little cruel, isn't he?"

Eloise gulped. Even though she had sent more than a few people to the hospital with broken bones, it was never like this. He could have finished the enemy off with one strike, yet he seemed to be toying with them, breaking their limbs until they could do nothing but twist around on the floor in an attempt to continue attacking.

Seeing this, Eli moved even closer to Elian...

"What are you doing?" Elian asked, He was surprised to see Eli retreat behind him.

"I accidentally read Dark Sun's thoughts and said them out loud, so he heard it." Eli explained simply.

"..... got it." Elian made a face, this was not the first time Eli was almost killed for discovering others' secrets. But this time, even with Eloise here, would it be possible to stop Dark Sun?

"Eloise, come back!" Panicking, he yelled for her.

Although Elian had an urge to run for it, Dark Sun happened to be blocking the exit. If they pushed past him, they might infuriate him further...

"What?" Eloise was in the middle of fighting. She had finally knocked an opponent down to the floor, when Elian's yell surprised her. She could only put the enemy down and quickly retreat.

"Eli is in danger of being silenced again."

"What?" Eloise yelled, "Don't tell me the person who wants to kill him is Dark Sun!"

After a moment of silence, Eli said, "Sorry."

"We're the ones who should say sorry. This time, we might not be able to protect you..." Elian grimaced.

Dark Sun slit the throat of the enemy that Eloise had abandoned halfway. He ignored the floor that was littered with enemies and slowly turned to look at Eli. He faintly radiated animosity, as if he considered Eli

to be another enemy he had to deal with.

Elian and Eloise immediately stood in front of Eli. Dark Sun would have to get past them before thinking of touching Eli.

But Ezart was puzzled. Weren't they teaming up against the modified humans just now? Why are they staring each other down?

"What? Dark Sun wouldn't kill Eli." Ezart said casually. Because Dark Sun is Dar, and Dar wouldn't kill Eli. He turned to Dark Sun and yelled, "Right, Dark Sun?"

Dark Sun was silent for a long time. So long that Ezart was beginning to suspect that he might actually do it, Then Dark Sun answered, "Master Daren wouldn't allow me to kill you. But remember, if you ever read mine or Master Daren's thoughts, never tell anybody, or I will kill you no matter what my Master says."

"I won't tell. Thank you for sparing me." Even though Eli's expression showed calm, his heart was pounding hard. He knew he had just barely escaped death.

"In exchange for letting me go, I will give you a piece of information."

Dark Sun waited silently for him to continue.

"Just now there was someone peeping from behind the door he left with frustration when these guys were defeated."

"Who was it?" Dark Sun asked with an expression devoid of all emotions.

"It was the same person who Elian fought in the battle simulator last time. I don't know his name."

"Shain Baylian," Dark Sun said.

He should have known. Last time, his Master had been attacked after Shain Baylian had spoken with him. Shain Baylian's father was the leader of the Lunaris Group. Was the Lunaris group the mastermind behind these modified humans?

When Dark Sun realised who was really behind the multiple attacks upon Devon Solaris, an instinct was triggered.....

Hunt down all of Devon Solaris' enemies!

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter cv2c6 END \*\*\*\*\*

1 The Bride with White Hair (白发魔女传) - A famous chinese movie classic about a lady who could control her hair and slaughter multitudes of skilled martial arts pugilists with. Not part of Yuwo's original text which stated Medusa instead. -

## 7th Hunt Demonic Rage

Translator: Aoi, Wryn

Proofreader: Wryn, Noobzilla

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The Demon's rage

Horridifies humans

Source of rage

Comes from humans

Devon held the phone in his hand, his expression so horrifying that even Kyle, who had been watching the Solaris Emperor for so many years, couldn't help but hide behind the computer monitor. He did not want to have nightmares from catching a glimpse of that demonic face.

"Bill, what's the status of the matter I had you investigate?" Devon asked coolly and calmly (certainly more cool than calm) as he struggled to suppress the urge to rush over and help Dar.

Kyle reported diligently, "With regards to the kidnapping incident approximately a month ago, the Lunar Group is most likely the instigator. They dumped massive quantities of stocks of the companies associated with the Solaris Group just before the incident. They have numerous scientists and medical researchers concentrated in one laboratory, yet there hasn't been any announcements of new products."

"Yue Baylian's Lunar Group?" Devon rubbed his chin softly with his

finger, a habitual move when he was deep in thought.

The great animosity Yue Baylian felt toward him was common knowledge. Although he was unaware of the reason, this was not the first time Yue Baylian had attempted to deal him a blow, therefore, Devon wasn't caught off guard.

Devon had concluded that a blatantly hostile enemy could be dealt with later. It was the clandestine foes who were more pertinent, hence he never paid much attention to the Lunar Group. However, he did not expect Yue Baylian, a CEO of a large business corporation, to kill him at the risk of a global financial crisis.

Even though he sold off the shares of the Solaris Group, if the Solaris Group had collapsed, it would not only bring about the disintegration of the Solaris Group but the collapse of the world's economy...

Could it be that he's holding a grudge against me for something I'd done to him? Devon struggled to remember, "Yue Baylian of the Lunar group... I don't recall buying his company or stealing his woman, nor have I ever snatched a contract from him... Strange, we've never even met. He doesn't have a reason to hate me so much!"

Kyle sighed and reported dutifully, "Solaris Emperor, the two of you have met. Yue Baylian was your classmate in middle school."

"Oh? Really?" Devon replied calmly, "I don't remember anymore, but it's not unusual. I don't remember any of my classmates from middle school."

"He was also your classmate in high school."

Devon hesitated, then continued, "Is that so? Well, I hardly remember any of my high school classmates."

"And your classmate in college."

"..." Devon fell silent, struggling to find an excuse, "Okay, this only means I don't have that great of a memory. Does he have a reason to hate me for that?"

"I don't know about that. However, according to the news, Yue Baylian is bisexual, and because of his failed confessions to a "certain classmate" throughout middle school, high school, and college, he particularly likes to keep mistresses with blonde hair or red eyes."

Blonde hair and red eyes? These traits were quite similar to his own...  
Ah!

"Yue Baylian courted me?" Devon slapped both hands down hard on the table, asking incredulously.

Kyle nodded, "Yes, and he pursued you for a duration of eight years. He gave you hundreds of presents, and presented different flowers every day during those eight years without fail..."

... Yet I don't remember him!

No wonder he hates me so much. Devon racked his brains but he just could not remember what Yue Baylian looked like. Strange, had Yue really courted him?

"... On the last attempt when he brought you a necklace, a family heirloom, to confess to you, you reportedly replied with one sentence."

"What sentence?" Devon was getting really curious. He really could not remember anything about what he had said back then.

Kyle looked at the data on the computer, grimacing as he replied, "You said, 'Who are you?'"

In the office, it was silent except for the sound of Kyle's typing.

After a long time, Devon suddenly stood up. He looked out at the blue sky through the full length glass, and said deeply, "I was busy looking for Dar. My heart was full of anxiety towards Dar's whereabouts and hatred towards father. There's no way it could contain anything else!"

Kyle replied simply, "Yes."

But Master Daren disappeared when you were seventeen, and Yue had been chasing you since you were thirteen.

"He doesn't understand how I felt back then. How could he just hate me like that?"

"Yes, he shouldn't indeed."

According to records, he once, on your request, mobilised 80% of his clan in search of young master Daren, almost bringing their operations to a standstill.

"Ah, this is all a big misunderstanding."

"Yes, a misunderstanding."

"So he shouldn't even hate me!" Devon turned around and bellowed, "No matter what, anyone who dares touch my Dar deserves to die!"

"Yes, he does." Kyle looked at the personnel available for mobilisation, "Solaris Emperor, do you want to send a stealth team to annihilate the laboratory surreptitiously or an army to raze it to the ground?"

In an instant, Devon returned from an infuriated brother to the calm Solaris Emperor, and evaluated scrupulously, "Sending an army would mean declaring war against the Lunar Group. If we start a war, we'll also have to deal with the baseless speculations. How troublesome! But the stealth unit is full of meticulously trained elites. I really don't want to waste them on a bunch of modified humans."

He was deep in thought, "Hmm, this is really troublesome..."

"If we let Dark Sun attack alongside the stealth unit, then there would be no need to start a war, and the amount of casualties will be at a minimum." Kyle dutifully suggested the most fitting solution.

Bang!

Devon slapped the sturdy desk hard with one hand and said coldly, "What did you just say?"

Kyle knew, the moment those words escaped his mouth that he had stepped on the Solaris Emperor's toes. He forcefully quietened his thumping heart and said coolly, "A solution. If it's not to your liking, please disregard it."

"Don't bring Dar into this, ever! You hear me?" Devon yelled.

"Yes, understood."

"Then send the stealth unit. I want the laboratory to disappear tonight! I'll deal with Yue Baylian later!"

"I'm going home to have dinner with Dar now. Work overtime and settle this!"

After issuing a decree like an emperor, Devon left through the secret door without looking back.

"I wonder when I have not worked overtime."

Kyle mumbled to himself. Alas, whose fault was it for meeting the Solaris Emperor back then? He could only resign himself to fate and work

overtime, trying to devise a strategy to minimise casualties of the stealth unit. If not, the Solaris Emperor would go berserk again once he saw the casualty count tomorrow.

After a while, the secret door to the office opened once more. Kyle lifted his head up curiously. The only people who could use this special entrance should only be the Solaris Emperor, Kyle himself, and a few secret operatives who hardly ever came by.

A youth with silver hair walked in slowly.

Oh! I remember. A month ago, another person was allowed entry. The younger brother of the Solaris Emperor, young master Daren Solaris.

"Hello," Dark Sun greeted emotionlessly.

Kyle replied calmly, "Hello."

"I'd like to inquire about some matters."

"Is that so?" Kyle continued calmly, "May I ask if young master Daren Solaris is at home? I'm more inclined to speak with him."

Dark Sun gave a mirthless smile, "Unfortunately, he's not."

"That is indeed regrettable." Kyle's eyes were filled with actual regret, but he asked professionally, "What is it you wished to ask of me?"

"News of the Lunar Alliance," Dark Sun replied, returning to his expressionless demeanor.

Kyle replied straightforwardly, "The Solaris Emperor will not allow me to tell you."

Dark Sun reverted to Daren in a split second. He smiled wilfully, "Gege must have told you that no matter what it is I want, you have to give it to me?"

"Yes, young master Daren."

Kyle watched haplessly as the "not at home" Daren bounced to the forefront. This is great. If he talked, Solaris Emperor would let him die a horrible death. If he did not talk, Dark Sun would let him die a horrible death, then after Daren cries to Solaris Emperor, he would let him die once more.

Alright, dying once is better than dying twice.

"The Lunar Alliance has a laboratory here. According to investigations, there's a high possibility that the modified humans were manufactured there. The Solaris Emperor just issued a decree to destroy this laboratory tonight with a stealth team. I will be very grateful if you can coordinate with the stealth unit."

Kyle printed out the map to the laboratory as he explained and handed it to Daren.

"Thanks Kyle-ge. I will coordinate with them. And don't worry, I won't tell gege that it was you who told me."

"You can't hide it from him." Kyle shook his head. As his adjutant, one must be prepared to serve the Solaris Emperor at all times. The ancient saying, keeping company with a lord is like keeping company with a tiger,1 probably describes his current predicament.

"Shain Baylian is my schoolmate. I have a friend who can read minds..." Daren hinted. He only hinted! He definitely wasn't about to teach others to lie to his brother!

"I see." Kyle nodded in understanding. Looks like he can live a little longer.

Daren studied the map and frowned, "Looks like it's quite a distance away, I will steal a car."

"The Solaris Emperor's personal parking lot is upstairs. Your brother has a rather magnificent collection of cars. The red sports car is the fastest. The white sedan is most durable in a crash and the blue has the best overall performance." Kyle reminded him kind-heartedly where to steal a car from and each car's unique abilities.

"Yeah. I understand. Thank you Kyle-ge." Daren smiled brilliantly.

"You're welcome," Kyle replied politely. He paused before continuing, "Young master Daren, please be careful. Your life is Solaris Emperor's everything."

"I know. Gege is also Dar's everything, so....."

"I absolutely will not allow anyone to hurt Master!"

Dark Sun grasped the map firmly and swiftly departed the office.

May no harm befall you. Kyle silently prayed as he watched Dark Sun leave before continuing with his mountainous pile of documents.

Lunaris Alliance Headquarters

Shain Baylian pounded down the pavement in hurried steps. His martial arts placed emphasis on speed. Now that he was enraged, he was walking even faster. The three subordinates following behind, double gunslinger, ugly dwarf and ice queen, could not catch up.

His three minions could only lower their heads and concentrate on catching up with the young master's footsteps, not daring to call after him. Anyone could tell that Shain Baylian's mood was exceptionally bad at the moment. Whoever dared to pluck the tiger's whiskers was going to have a bad outcome.

Shain walked all the way to a heavy black door that was polished to a reflective sheen. He took in a deep breath to ensure that his emotions had settled so as to not spout any unnecessary words in anger and in turn infuriate the person behind the black door. That had consequences that even he could not bear.

Shain knocked on the door, waited for a lazy “Enter” before he pushed the door open.

The three minions did not dare follow. That was a forbidden area to them, the room of the CEO of Lunar Alliance.

The room was decorated in Chinese style just like Shain’s. Massive scrolls of calligraphy hung off the walls on the side of an enormous dragon throne carved out of gold. Purple embroidered cushions adorned the seat, looking inexplicably exorbitant.

But it was the person who was lounging lazily on his side on the dragon throne who was more astonishing. His head of straight long purplish-black hair was fanned out on the chair. He was decked out in a purple ancient Chinese garment that flowed all the way to the ground, matching the décor of the room.

Shain stood before the throne and bowed respectfully, “I have come to pay my respects father.”

The person on the throne opened his elongated golden eyes, his mouth curving into a line resembling a smile. He stretched lazily and casually said, “Oh~ Shain. You took out 6 failed experiments, was it to play with?”

In contrast to his father’s leisure, Shain was very restrained. He replied with foreboding, “I.... used them to deal with my schoolmates.”

“Schoolmates?” Yue Baylian gradually shifted into a seating position. His beautiful eyes narrowed into slits, “Your schoolmates?”

Have I been exposed? Indeed I can't hide it from father.. Shain lowered his head in acknowledgement, "Yes, they were used to deal with the people who rescued the Solaris Emperor."

Yue stood up from his throne, he walked gracefully despite the long train of his robes, like he was born to wear such luxurious garments.

Yue walked up to his son, his oval face plastered against his son's as he whispered, "You've discovered him..... yet you didn't report to me?"

"I'm sorry..... I was unsure if he was the person who rescued Solaris Emperor and I wanted to confirm it before informing you father."

Although Yue's features were delicate and refined, those who knew him shuddered in fear that penetrated the depths of their bones. Father was extremely furious. He knew from experience that anything that concerns the Solaris Emperor brought about capricious changes in Yue's moods.

"You wanted confirmation?" Yue's lackadaisical expression changed in a flash as he slapped his son across the face in admonishment, "By the time we get your confirmation, Devon Solaris would already be at our doorstep!"

Shain clenched his fist but his expression remained unchanged despite receiving a slap. He faced his father again and continued the report, "I was just testing out the abilities of Solaris Emperor's modified human. The Solaris Emperor probably won't make a mountain out of a molehill. Isn't competition between trade federations a common occurrence?"

"Make a mountain out of a molehill?" Yue's delicate face darkened, "Do you know who that modified human is?"

"I only know that he's called Dark Sun." Shain replied honestly.

Yue bellowed, "I don't care what he's called. He is Devon Solaris' brother. The brother he'd been searching for for 8 years!"

"What? The Solaris Emperor has a brother?"

Shain was dumbfounded. He had never heard of Solaris Emperor having a younger brother. He paused, could he be adopted? Just like he was.....

"He does and that is the only thing he cares about. The only thing!" Yue continued with conviction.

Initially, when he kidnapped Devon Solaris and saw the images of a scrawny boy levelling his modified humans, he was shocked. But even more shocking was the anxiety of the normally calm Devon Solaris. In the past, the only time he would reveal an expression other than calm and disdain was when he spoke about his younger brother.

It was then he knew that the boy was none other than Devon's younger brother!

"You touched Devon Solaris' most precious treasure." Yue grabbed Shain's collar and threatened, "Next time, you are not to make any

decisions by yourself, especially with regards to Devon Solaris. If you make one more mistake, you will cease to be my heir and you can scam back to your family. Do you hear me?"

Shain lowered his head in answer, "Yes, I do."

Yue expressionlessly released Shain from his grasp and made his way back to his throne. He lay down and his expression became beguiling once more. He languidly said, "I guess the laboratory is a lost cause now that Devon Solaris is angered. Withdraw all the scientists and surgeons from the facility but leave the modified humans there."

An unusual gleam flashed across his attractive golden eyes.

"I want that laboratory to be a massive trap for Dark Sun."

And Dark Sun shall be the ultimate bait for Devon Solaris!

Yue closed his eyes, indolently lounging on the throne imagining the joyous moment of ensnaring the man with glistening blond hair and ruby red eyes.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Volume 2 Chapter 7 END  
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1 伴君如伴虎 (keeping company with a lord is like keeping company

with a tiger) – Your life is always at risk. Refers to the capricious nature of overlords.

Eclipse Hunter v02c08

8th Hunt: Demon Hunt

Translator: Wryn

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The demon's strike

Nothing left unscathed

The demon's hunting day

All creatures flee

"Papa Avery, I'm hanging out with my friends, I might come home very late."

Daren Avery called home to inform of his whereabouts via his mobile.

On the other end of the phone, Theodore Avery asked onerously after a long pause, "Dar... Does having dinner require the use of the Death Scythe?"

"Ah..." Dar was flabbergasted, "Papa Avery, you noticed I took the Scythe?"

"Yeah. Devon called home earlier ranting about the modified humans appearing and the attack on you. I thought you might be using the Death Scythe soon and was going to perform some maintenance, only to find it missing."

"Don't tell gege ok?" Daren pleaded.

"Where are you going?"

Seeing as his attempt at lying failed, Daren dared not lie to Theodore further. He replied frankly, "I'm going to destroy the laboratory of those modified humans."

"Your brother will be furious. No, he'll implode with rage..."

Daren was also aware that if his brother knew about it, he would be extremely, intensely, exceptionally angry. However, he could not circumvent the basic imperative of hunting down Devon's enemies. In addition, he did not even want to rebel against this imperative, he wanted to protect his brother.

"Just don't let him find out."

Devon Solaris would know. He would definitely find out. Even the wounds on your body would not escape the detection of that freak with a brother complex. Theodore grumbled internally while knowing that Daren would not give up despite his advice.

That's because Dar and Devon are brothers through and through. One has a younger brother complex and the other has an older brother complex. They become equally stubborn in all matters pertaining to the other!

"Alright, I will help tell your brother..." I just hope that Devon won't instantly unmask this lie and shoot me on the spot.

"Thank you Papa Avery." Daren replied ecstatically.

"You're welcome... If you really want to thank me, bring a few undamaged modified human corpses back for me to experiment on!"

"Hehe. Papa Avery, Dar has sent a present to you! It should arrive shortly." Dar chuckled on the other end, thinking about how Papa Avery

would absolutely adore the presents.

"Oh?" Theodore asked dumbly. He was still thinking of reminding Dar to call his brother when the line went dead.

"Hello, hello? Seriously. Dar just hung up like that. How in the world am I supposed to inform Devon and stay alive..."

Ding Dong!

Was that... the door bell? Theodore spaced out for a second before reacting. The three members of this household all possessed keys and hence, would certainly not ring the door bell. Moreover, the three members of this household were equally friendless, nobody would visit them. Even the mailman has never approached.

Theodore walked to the front door and pressed on the intercom button. Several opulent youngsters he did not recognise stood beyond. Wait! He had seen one of them before... more accurately speaking, he had seen that head of hair before. An amber porcupine head.

Dar's friends?

Theodore was perplexed. Dar isn't home, what are they doing here?

The girl on the screen dumped the modified human on her shoulder onto the ground with a loud thump, yelling unhappily, "What is this? Dar is so strange, how can anyone like this kind of present?"

"Quiet down, the person who likes "this kind of present" is Dar's father. You must be respectful to your elders, Eloise," a boy with a bright smile chided.

"What respect!" the girl called Eloise incredulously rebutted. "I think only freaks will like this kind of present!"

"You guys are really noisy!" The strapping, orange, porcupine head bristled, "Anyway, Dark Sun said Dar wants us to deliver these people to his Papa Avery. We should just do it, who cares if his father is a freak?"

"It would've been good if we delivered it to his brother. Dar is so cute, his brother must be handsome, his father... I know he's a geezer just by the sound of it."

Even if he's not a geezer, he's already a father. You're not even letting fathers off the hook...? Elian and Eli glanced at each other, exchanging hapless looks.

Just as Eloise was about to suggest throwing down the presents and leaving, the door flung open to reveal a refined and scholarly man wearing a pair of small spectacles. Yet this man of such refinement spat in displeasure, "My apologies, the freak I am just loves this type of present!"

Eloise stared at him intensely, thoroughly checking him out before swallowing her mouthful of saliva. Theodore was getting goose bumps and just as he was about to slam the door, Eloise screeched, "So hot! A refined hottie!"

Her eyes morphed into hearts, "You must be the brother Dar frequently mentions!"

Theodore quirked his eyebrow as he looked at the girl who just called him a freak and geezer. With the attitude of a member of a peanut gallery, he denied, "No, his brother is not back yet. I am the Papa Avery that Dar was talking about."

Eloise's jaw dropped. "What? You're that freaky old man?"

"..." Theodore replied coldly: "You can call me a freak, but you're not allowed to call me an old man."

Elian hastily pushed the fossilised Eloise aside as he politely explained, "Sir, are you Dar's father? How do you do? We are Dar's schoolmates; Dar wanted us to deliver these things... these 'people'."

Elian was left on tenterhooks, wondering if Dar's father would be infuriated.

After all, these malevolent humanoid "things" still twitching on the ground despite broken disjointed limbs were not exactly ideal presents.

Instead of flying off the handle, Theodore crouched down and observed the six deformed but still very much alive modified humans, revealing a creepy smile that gave the four youngsters a chill that penetrated down to their bones.

He adjusted the spectacles perched on his nose, as he tenderly caressed the squirming "things" on the ground, saying gratefully, "Dar, you really are my angel!"

Meanwhile, Dark Sun stood before a seemingly abandoned factory, glancing at the map Kyle provided through his silver visors. There's no mistake. This is it.

All that was left was to await the arrival of the stealth team...

As the Solaris Emperor's secretary, Kyle's efficiency was unimaginably expeditious. Dark Sun had raced to the location after departing from the headquarters without any delay other than the brief phone call to Theodore.

Yet, the stealth team appeared within ten minutes.

Three individuals arrived equipped with heavy artillery. They proffered the emblem of the Solaris Emperor before asking, "Dark Sun?"

Dark Sun nodded. He did not possess a mark but instead revealed a unique key. It was an elegant circular rim beset with grooves and ridges resembling the spokes of the sun attached to an elongated shaft encasing a microchip within. Should it be stolen, it could be made to self destruct via satellite.

With one look at the key, the trio simultaneously took a sharp intake of breath. Wasn't this the personal key of the Solaris Emperor?

The Solaris Emperor detested all things bothersome, such as a large jangling chunk of keys, hence everything which required a key, including his room, doors, car, security safe etc., had specially constructed locks that could only be unlocked by this particular key. Naturally, it was the one and only of its kind.

However, it is no longer the only one in existence. There now exists two, one in the hands of the Solaris Emperor and the other with Dark Sun.

The trio recognised it instantly and bowed with respect, "Right hand of Solaris Emperor, let us assist and protect you with our lives."

Solaris Emperor's right hand? Are they referring to Kyle-ge? He is undisputedly gege's right hand man. Without him, gege would be crippled, Daren mused silently.

Kyle was undeniably capable. He sent only three personnel, a force perfectly suited to Dark Sun's personality. Being inept at commanding and leading, if he was supplied an entire unit, he would have abandoned it in favour of a one man show.

In addition, the trio was equipped with heavy artillery which Dark Sun was lacking in. It was immeasurably useful in breaking through heavily fortified defences.

"How do you wish us to assist you?"

Dark Sun motioned behind him. "Stay behind me. Just blast whatever I tell you to blast."

"Yes sir."

The well-trained trio promptly manoeuvred behind Dark Sun. Dark Sun placed his palm upon the black case, causing it to split open with a crack along four silver lines that extended from his palm. The object within the case was separated into three sections: a silver rod segmented into two and a blood red blade ensconced between skeletal claws.

The Death Scythe, Dark Sun's most fearsome weapon.

The trio watched in stupefaction as Dark Sun knelt before the case, nimbly assembling the Scythe. As he stood up with it in his right arm, he revealed a detached smile, exuding the aura of guileless terror.

The trio shuddered unconsciously.

Could it be a grim reaper in an angel's disguise?

"Let's go, it's time for Dark Sun to hunt." Saying that, he strode towards the abandoned factory.

"Yes sir." The trio followed closely behind.

At the entrance of the factory, Dark Sun observed that the old dilapidated steel door hanging off its hinges remained immobile despite the gust of wind. Evidently, it was much sturdier than its appearance belied. In fact, it was possibly more impenetrable than many undamaged

buildings.

"Blow it up," Dark Sun whispered.

The roar of the machine gun rang out immediately, a small dent appeared on the lock of the derelict steel door.

No further damage other than a small dent was sustained after the onslaught from the specially constructed machine gun of the Solaris Federation.

It looked like they found the right place, this was undoubtedly the covert base of operations for the Lunar Alliance.

Dark Sun remained motionless. Upon assessing the situation, the well-trained trio standing behind instantly up scaled to a weapon with greater fire power: a bazooka slung over one of their shoulders.

"Dark Sun... sir, please step back." One of them warned Dark Sun, a little unsure of how to address him.

Dark Sun moved a few paces back, the man with the bazooka knelt on the ground and launched the missile. A massive shock wave accompanied a rumbling explosion from the depths of hell.

A cloud of dust engulfed the door before gradually dissipating and revealing a hole tall enough for a man to enter. Although the debris of the lambasted exterior looked worse for wear, the white-washed corridors bleached under bright lights remained spotlessly clean beyond with not

a hint of destitution.

"Let's go."

Dark Sun sighed before plunging ahead.

"Has the fish taken the bait?"

Yue Baylian languidly lay on his dragon throne, while Shain sat on a smaller chair, attended by several servants. One was massaging his legs, while others were standing next to the enormous plasma screen, driving the CCTV cameras to capture Dark Sun at all instances.

"Originally I thought that Devon Solaris would not allow his brother to endanger himself." Yue muttered to himself elegantly, somewhat vexed, "Is it possible that he doesn't love his brother as much as I thought he would? Or is there some other reason?"

"Perhaps he came behind the Solaris Emperor's back." Shain's eyes were glued to the plasma screen even though he had witnessed Dark Sun's terrifying abilities before.

"Shain, you are so clever. This is very possible." Yue Baylian's mood lightened considerably. Devon's ignorance signified the markedly increased chances of capturing Dark Sun. Ensnaring Dark Sun was... hehe... no different from enslaving Devon Solaris.

Shain paid scant attention to his father's praise because on the screen, Dark Sun had encountered the outer defensive ring of modified humans.

These were stronger than the ones he had misappropriated, Dark Sun should not be able to defeat... them... so... easily?

His eyes grew wide as saucers as he watched Dark Sun's fluid movements, deceptively slow but in reality too quick for the brain to register. Just as the eyes were appreciating Dark Sun's motion, blood had arced in sprays, only then did he realise that the terrifying Scythe had already severed the neck of his opponent.

Shain shuddered. He knew that although modified humans had vastly increased strength and speed, their equilibrium was a major weakness.

Inhuman strength came from the robotic arms, which although strong are not agile and hence unable to perform intricate martial art moves.

Although speed was Shain's greatest pursuit, he refused to modify his limbs. He knew that even if his speed was accelerated beyond the speed of his reaction, he would in effect sacrifice his dexterity despite appearing faster and stronger on the surface. Once a move was made there was no recourse, it would be too late by the time the brain received the signal to change postures.

Dark Sun's flawless wielding of the heavy Death Scythe was a testament to his strength and speed, far surpassing those of the modified humans. Shain was unable to detect any of their flaws on him.

Dark Sun swiftly leapt along the corridor, his feet pushing off the walls and ceiling, rebounding before his opponents.

A shadowed darted back and forth like a bolt of lightning, occasionally suspended in the air creating a graceful silhouette of a woman with long silver hair, and leaving a trail of spurting blood behind.

With each step, bloody blossoms bloomed. With each swing of the scythe, a life was harvested.

Can a modified human really display such elegance and fluidity as if executing martial arts dance moves?

Baylian was enthralled. Just as his brain was going into overload, Yue reeled in his indolent expression and sat upright, an ugly complexion on his face.

Although he had previously glimpsed Dark Sun's battle when he sent men to kidnap Devon Solaris, his modified humans had died too quickly for him to ascertain Dark Sun's abilities with the scythe at that time. But now he was seeing everything with clarity!

Terrifying! Absolutely terrifying!

Even if Dark Sun was swarmed by his best experiments, could he be stopped?

The answer was a resounding no!

A sliver of malice slipped through the cracks of his perpetual mask of elegance.

He contemplated whether he should detonate the entire complex, destroying Dark Sun with it. If he is not destroyed, he would become the Solaris Emperor's most fearsome weapon... if Devon Solaris had the heart to use his brother as a weapon.

Suddenly he was beset with memories...

Those beautiful ruby red eyes overflowed with immeasurable desolation, "I beg you, help me find my brother. My father hates him too much, I'm afraid that any later and I won't get to see him again. I'm afraid I won't see Dar again, my Dar..."

He won't. He won't use his own brother as a weapon. Devon Solaris is a person who cares only for his brother and nothing else.

Yue simmered down. He could not kill Dark Sun. Only with Dark Sun alive will the Solaris Emperor have a weakness.

He hesitated. Moreover, what would be the consequences of Dark Sun's death?

If the demon who held the world in his palm with god-like control were to lose his only emotional connection, this world could potentially be plunged into the abyss of hell...

Dark Sun must not be killed. It would only serve to enrage Devon Solaris... drive him completely berserk. Capturing Dark Sun would be equivalent to controlling Devon Solaris, the god in control of this world!

"Father, I'm afraid those modified humans can't hold Dark Sun back."

Despite being shaken by Dark Sun's moves, Shain was sure to remind his father in order to prevent his fury from being unleashed on those around once he realised that all his modified humans had been slaughtered.

Yue lay down again and replied casually, "Let him kill them. Just treat it as a sacrifice to a demon."

He was too careless. He would definitely make them yield to him next time.

One was a demon akin to god.

The other was a demon akin to a grim reaper.

Unfortunately, they let this human discover their greatest weakness: each other!

"Muahahaha..."

Yue laughed uncontrollably, disregarding his son's astonishment.

He roared, "Devon Solaris, Dark Sun. So what if you're demons? I have discovered your weaknesses and next time you will kneel before me this ordinary human! Hahaha..."

Dark Sun's mobile phone vibrated just as he beheaded a modified human. The long stupefied trio watched him answer the phone.

"Where are you?" Devon's unusually monotonous voice was transmitted.

Dark Sun replied in Dar's innocent voice while hacking a random modified human's neck, "Gege? I'm having dinner with my friends!"

Devon's voice was devoid of emotion, "Oh? Which friend?"

"It's... Ezart! You call him porcupine head."

Reaper's claws detach!

Dark Sun sent the gigantic blade spinning forth, skewering two enemies who were trying to escape to the wall.

"Oh. Hang on a second." Devon's voice grew distant before it was replaced by a deeper voice. "Dar..."

Dark Sun's expression changed abruptly. "...Ezart?"

"Yup, it's me. Elia and them are here too."

Dark Sun morphed completely back to Daren. He held onto his phone in panic and retreated behind the stealth team members, making a sign

for them to stave off the enemy.

The trio instantaneously rushed into the fray to hold off the few remaining modified humans. Another voice resounded from the phone - Elian haplessly said, "Dar, your brother is holding a BHP09 to your dad's head. His eyes are saying that if you still won't come home, he will kill your father."

"No! Elian-ge, you must stop my brother. I am coming home right now." Daren said anxiously, "You must definitely stop my brother from killing Papa Avery."

"I'll try my best, but your brother looks like he's going beserk. Besides, he's 'that person'. Who can stop him...?" Elian mumbled.

Daren was overwrought. He had to get home this instant!

"Retreat!" Daren ordered the trio.

Although they were perplexed about retreating at the cusps of victory, their training forbade them from disobeying their superiors. They only replied with a "Yes sir."

Then they hastily followed Dark Sun in retreat...

Previously when Ezart and the others were at Daren's house and Theodore had emerged to receive his presents...

Eloise had intended to barge into the house and shamelessly stay till breakfast the next day. But Elian thwarted her plans as he apologised to the affronted Theodore while bidding farewell.

Theodore was about to discourteously say, "I won't see you out" when another man's voice emitted from behind.

"Where's Dar?"

Theodore's face paled as if he had heard the baying of a demon. He had to take several deep breaths before he had the fortitude to turn around and reply, "He's gone out with his friends."

Then Eloise blurted out a sentence which made everyone present want to strangle her.

"Huh? Dar went out with friends? Didn't he say he was going to have dinner with his brother?"

Subsequently, the four people were "invited" into Daren's house. Once Eloise laid eyes on Devon Solaris the "drop dead gorgeous super hottie" she had screamed till she nearly fainted.

But it was, in fact, Eli who really ended up fainting.

According to his retrospective recollections, it was because he had read Devon's mind... which was unlike anything he had ever encountered before. His thoughts swirled like colossal maelstroms, coalescing and crashing onto him in waves upon waves of convoluted complex thoughts.

Eli felt like his brain was being assaulted by a hundred encyclopaedias simultaneously.

"Solaris Emperor!" An ashen Elian emitted the world renowned name.

Under the terrorising gaze of the Solaris Emperor, Theodore capitulated summarily and divulged all of Dar's plans. Consequently, the pitiful secretary Kyle was on the receiving end of the harrowing bombardment via video call.

In the end, everyone lined up neatly on the sofa like obedient students as they watched Devon ring Daren, asking him to return home.

After Daren promised to return, the Solaris Emperor presided over the obedient students with disdain, stating matter-of-factly, "Your lives are forfeit if Dar's identity is leaked."

Everyone nodded in unison like bobbleheads, except for Ezart. He sniffed, "I won't reveal Dar's identity, but not because of you. It's for Dar."

A sliver of appreciation flashed past Devon's eyes. He is indeed a friend chosen by Dar... But, I will definitely not praise this fellow with a weird hairstyle! It's his own fault for having a weird hairstyle. What if Dar's hairstyle decided to become bad as well?

"Theodore! You actually were in league with Dar to deceive me..." Devon stared maliciously at the arguably oldest person gathered before him.

For the sake of preserving his inconsequential life, Theodore relied on his familiarity with Devon's weakness to change the topic. "Dar and his friends probably haven't had dinner yet. They must be starving. If you organise a dinner, Dar will surely be overjoyed when he comes back!"

Devon paused upon hearing that, images of Dar seeing a table full of food surrounded by brother, father and friends floated into his mind. What kind of happy expression would Dar have?

It must be a very brilliant and adorable smile!

Devon picked up the phone immediately and asked Kyle to order a table full of dishes. "Kyle, get the most highly rated restaurants to send their best dishes. Oh yes, Dar likes to eat fried chicken. There must be fried chicken and fries. Oh and make some marinated chicken wings and barbeque..."

(Kyle: Solaris Emperor. Are you sure you want a five star Michelin restaurant and not KFC?)

"Phew~" Theodore heaved a sigh of relief when he saw Devon busily ordering food. He deduced that Daren must be relatively unharmed from the sounds of the earlier phone conversation and Devon's eagerness in organising supper.

He turned his head with the intention of comforting those meeting the Solaris Emperor for the first time. Don't worry, holding a gun to someone's head is a normal occurrence. He won't necessary fire. Although, firing is also a common occurrence but...

But as he turned around, he was accosted by the respectful gazes of the entire row of people. Elian, the boy with the brilliant smile, even said deferentially, "Mr. Avery was courageous in talking back to the Solaris Emperor."

"Hehehe, it's nothing once you get used to it," Theodore replied self-deprecatingly. Yes, as long as you get used to having a gun held to your head.

Within moments, a concealed door to the room opened. Kyle stepped forward and clapped his hands and a line of waiters dressed in the finest suits with the most immaculate appearances and postures entered with ceramic and silver platters. The platters looked liked they belonged to a museum instead of being used for containing fried chicken.

The crowd stared in disbelief as the waiters set up a long dining table and meal preparation area for a stern head chef who would personally prepare the dishes.

Kyle explained to Solaris Emperor, "Fried chicken and French fries taste best when they are fresh out from the pan, so I brought the chef here to await orders."

"Very good." Devon nodded in satisfaction. "Dar should be arriving soon. You can start now. I want him to smell the fragrance the moment he steps into the house."

Kyle nodded and indicated to the chef. The latter began cooking with trepidation, his life's most harrowing dish consisting of fried chicken and French fries.

Just as everyone started salivating at the scent of the food, the main doors burst open.

Daren anxiously dashed in front of Theodore pleading, completely unaware of the situation, "Gege, do not kill Papa Avery!"

Dar, you really are my angel! Theodore was so touched by Dar's actions that he almost cried. They both had the same manufacturers, why is one so adorable and the other so detestable?

"Gege, why do you always want to kill Papa Avery?" Dar lowered his eyes dejectedly. "Does gege dislike Papa Avery?"

Seeing his little brother upset, Devon hastily clarified, "No! I absolutely do not dislike Theodore, I "like" your Papa Avery very much."

What a terrifying kind of "like"... the congregation thought silently to themselves.

"Really? That's fantastic... Ezart, Elian, Eloise and Eli. It's great that you haven't been killed by gege." Daren finally noticed the rest of the people present and was ecstatic that everyone was still alive and well.

"...alive but almost scared to death," Eloise muttered under her breath.

"I'd never imagined that you were the Solaris Emperor's younger brother." Elian smiled wistfully.

"And that you are Dark Sun." Eli stared at Daren's attire.

Daren hung his head in remorse. "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to deceive you all."

"I... it's okay..." the trio replied simultaneously because the monarch who held the world in his hands was piercing them with his frosty glare.

"Dar, are you hungry?" Devon asked with concern.

"Yeah. Starving." Daren nodded earnestly. His stomach was crying out in protest as a result of his strenuous exploits. Such gargantuan expenditure of energy required a similarly immense amount of sustenance.

"Smells nice... is that fried chicken?"

Assured of Theodore and his companion's safety, the ravenous Daren finally noticed the fragrance. It was his favourite fried chicken, both delicious and high in calories.

"Yes, it's your favourite fried chicken and french fries." Devon warmly suggested, "Why don't you invite your friends?"

Daren was struck dumb for a second before he leapt up in excitement and dragged Ezart and Elian by the hand. "Ezart, Elian, Eloise and Eli quick! Quick come have supper with us!"

With Daren's invitation, Ezart unceremoniously sat at the table, grabbed a few pieces of fried chicken and began chomping down after giving one to Daren.

Daren cheerfully accepted the fried chicken and began inhaling his food with Ezart.

Seeing them, everyone sat down around the table, the atmosphere resembling a family gathered around the fireplace.

Daren was the happiest amongst them all. He busied himself with distributing fried chicken to Devon and Theodore, heaping fries onto Ezart and Elian and filling his own stomach with not a moment of rest.

"Dar, why don't I get any..." Eloise

Daren hastily apologised, "I'm sorry Eloise, and Eli. This is all for you!"

He dumped an entire platter of a freshly made fried chicken onto their plates, forming a mountainous pile of chicken.

Eloise squished Dar in her enthusiastic embrace and forcefully planted several kisses on his cheeks. "Dar, I love you to death!"

"I like you too Eloise, although you can be a little scary sometimes..."

Daren giggled hesistantly. Fortunately, Eloise had ascended into fried chicken heaven and did not notice the word "scary".

"Dar, are you happy?" Devon gazed warmly at his little brother's brilliant smile.

"Yes, very happy! This is the first time I'm eating with so many people! And they are all my friends!" Daren broke out into an exuberant smile.

Devon smiled and nodded in response. "As long as you're happy."

In a split second, he turned around and frostily ordered Ezart & co, "From now on, you have to have meals with Dar here at least once a week!"

"Nn, no problum, Oi ave neva aten sooch gud fry chicun! Nes time oi will come eet wif Dar ofnen," Eloise replied through her mouth stuffed with food while she fought others off in search of chicken.

Ezart shrugged but did not reply.

Elian said resolutely, "I will have meals with Dar, but it's not because of you, it's for Dar!"

Devon smiled, his eyes never leaving Dar's exuberant smile.

If it was for Dar, then it was also for him, because Dar was his everything.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Volume 2 Chapter 8 END

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Eclipse Hunter v2Extra

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It was Sunday morning. Daren happily packed his bag for the day's activities. He had decided to go watch Ezart compete in the arena, and then have supper with him.

"Gege, Ezart and I are going to hang out today. Oh, and Xiao Ai1 too."

"Who's Xiao Ai?" Devon's initial smile turned into a frown upon hearing the unfamiliar name. Before Dar could reply, Devon suddenly recalled that Dar had a friend named Ai-something and wondered if Dar was talking about her.

"Xiao Ai is my girlfriend!" came Daren's candid reply.

Devon was momentarily stunned by the declaration.

"Dar, let's go!" Ezart's loud, impatient voice sounded from outside.

"Coming!" Daren quickly replied. He turned and hugged the petrified Devon, saying, "Gege, I'm leaving now." He then went over to hug Theodore, who was seated on the sofa and said, "I'm leaving, Papa Avery!"

Theodore's still had his face buried in his newspaper and only mumbled

a disinterested goodbye in reply.

"DAR!" Ezart's voice growing more and more impatient.

"I'm coming, I'm coming!" Daren hastily picked up his bag and rushed out the door leaving only Devon and Theodore in the living room.

Theodore was in a semi-comatose state due to extremely low blood pressure secondary to waking too early while the former sat petrified by his brother's declaration that he had a girlfriend.

Devon remained that way for a full half hour before stuttering, "Th-Theodore..."

"Hrm? Bye, Dar..." Theodore replied reflexively, still drowsy from sleep deprivation.

Devon seized Theodore's shoulder and shook him violently, while shrieking, "Since when were Dar and Ai-whatever going out?! He's only sixteen for crying out loud! How could he be in a relationship at sixteen?! I forbid it."

Abruptly shaken from his daze, Theodore didn't know what was going on. "What? What? An earthquake? Dar, protect... me..." Except it was not Dar before him, but the furious face of the Solaris Emperor. Oh! Why was it Devon and not an earthquake... Theodore secretly wished for a 10.0 magnitude earthquake instead of this.

"Eloise is Dar's girlfriend?"

Theodore frowned as he shook his head. "Impossible, Dar's really scared of her."

"But he said Xiao Ai was his girlfriend!" Devon emphasized loudly.

Theodore pushed up his glasses, "Even if Eloise really is his girlfriend, in this day and age, it's about time anyway. If Dar has a girlfriend, wouldn't he be more like a normal teenager?"

"Excuse me?!"

Devon sat elegantly with his legs crossed on a black chair, his chin resting on one hand while the other lay on his knee, giving off the air of an arrogant lord. The only peculiarity was the shiny BHP09 in his hand, pointed at the only other person in the room.

"Er, nothing. I was saying that I'll go call Elian about this now!"

Theodore quickly walked over to the telephone and dialed Elian's number. The phone continued to ring for quite awhile before Elian's upper body appeared on the screen. He looked harried, his hair wet and plastered to his forehead with rivulets of water dripping everywhere. It seemed as though he had just showered; or rather, he had been showering, when he heard the phone ring and came running out to answer it..

Seeing Theodore's face, he gaped momentarily before awkwardly saying, "Eh, erm... Mr. Avery! Please give me a few seconds..." Sounds of scurrying footsteps emanated from the phone and then Elian's face appeared once again. This time, his hair was half dry and he had put on some clothes. "What can I do for you?" Elian asked carefully.

Pushing up his glasses, Theodore replied, "The Solaris Emperor would like to know if Dar and Eloise are going out."

"Wha?" Elian started, but quickly shook his head in response, "How is that possible? Dar is really scared of her!"

So that part was true. Theodore nodded.

Devon furiously pushed him aside, picked up the receiver, and asked darkly, "Then who is Dar's girlfriend?"

Suddenly seeing Devon appear on-screen gave Elian another shock and he quickly shook his head, saying, "Dar has a girlfriend? I'm completely unaware of it!"

"You'd better not lie to me." Devon hissed icily.

"I-I seriously don't know!" Elian stuttered. "I've been working on my investigation recently and I haven't seen Dar for days..." He looked as though he was on the verge of tears.

Devon narrowed his eyes menacingly as if he hadn't believed a single word Elian said.

"Theodore! Dial Eloise for me now." he ordered. The screen split into two, one with Elia waiting anxiously, and the other awaiting Eloise's answer.

"Hello?" Eloise's weary face appeared on the screen. But the moment she laid eyes on Theodore and Devon, her face immediately lit up and her hands flew to her heart with an expression that said "I can't take it anymore".

"Whoaaa! Two super hot guys~~ Oh! Am I still dreaming?" she shrieked.

Theodore gestured at the hungry eyes of the girl on the screen, "Could this be Dar's girlfriend?"

Devon's mouth twitched, "...Hang up."

Theodore had already reached a similar conclusion and terminated the call.

Elia relaxed. Thank the heavens she didn't make Devon mad.

"Solaris emperor, please don't worry, if Dar really does have a girlfriend, he would tell you right away.." He sought to appease the Solaris Emperor.

"He already did! He said his girlfriends was 'Xiao Ai'!" Devon gestured toward Elia's picture on the screen, "HANG UP!"

Theodore did so again.

Devon sat on his office chair, an ugly expression on his face as he drummed his fingers rhythmically on the armrest.

"Why don't you just ask Dar?" Theodore could not stand the oppressive silence, like the calm before Armageddon, and quickly suggested this. He felt that this so called girlfriend of Dar's did not even exist. Considering Dar's child-like ways, he probably didn't even know what girlfriends were for!

Devon also thought that this was a good idea. Asking Dar directly was a lot faster..... But what if Dar thought that he was too nosy? What if Dar got mad at him and asked him to mind his own business? What would he do then?

The thought sent Devon spiraling into anguish, "Ahhh! Please Dar, don't hate your gege~!"

"....."

A bead of cold sweat dripped from Theodore, he replied haplessly, "Fine, I'll ask him"

"Why didn't you say so earlier?" Daren barked impatiently, "What are you waiting for? Call him!"

"Yes, yes!" Theodore dialed Dar's number obediently.

The screen shifted into the "Waiting" mode, and soon Dar's smiling face appeared on it. "Papa Avery!" He yelled happily.

Theodore was just about to confront him about the issue when Devon ran up and shoved him aside.

"Dar!" Even though Devon was furious, when he saw Dar's brilliant smile, he couldn't help but smile back. He warmly asked, "What are you doing? What's making you so happy?"

"Gege!" Dar's dazzling smile was as bright as the sun. He announced in a pure and innocent voice, "I'm getting married right now!"

Getting married? Devon instantly became petrified.

"Aiyah! I'll talk to you later, gege, I have to call Elia-ge!"

Daren hung up, leaving Theodore and Devon staring at a black screen. Theodore remained silent, a thousand misgivings in his heart about looking at Devon. He did not want to catch an accidental glimpse at the reincarnation of an Asura or something that would keep him sleepless for many nights to come.

"Elia... Xiao Ai! Dar was talking about Elia!" Devon remained petrified for a while longer until he suddenly leapt up and bellowed "That little brat dared to trick me! He is the Xiao Ai Dar mentioned! There's no mistake! Elia, you actually lured my cute little Dar into marrying you?! I

will get you for this!" Devon dashed to the phone and was about to give orders to his subordinates when Theodore intervened.

"Wait! Wait a second!" He swiftly blocked Devon's way to the telephone. There must have been a misunderstanding; how was it possible for Dar and Elian to get married without their family?

Devon's eyes burned like the scorching flames of hell, and his voice was as cold as ice as he snarled, "Get out of my way."

"Yes sir!" Theodore gave up in a flash and ducked out of the way.

Theodore sighed internally. Oh Elian... It's not that I don't want to help you, but you know whenever the Solaris Emperor gets involved with matters regarding Dar, his mind twists itself into a thousand knots, his humanity deserts him, and he becomes trigger happy... At this moment, I can only hope you've prayed and burned enough incense, because only God can protect you now... But if you don't usually burn incense, that's okay too. I will fully utilise your corpse, from the hair on your head to the nails on your toes for my experiments... Theodore could not suppress a tiny smile as he adjusted the glasses perched on his nose.

Meanwhile, the unsuspecting Elian shuddered as a chill ran down his spine... I must've caught a cold from rushing out of the shower earlier.

Devon dialed a series of numbers and ordered in a detached tone, "Stealth unit, seize Elian and bring him to me now!"

It was not long before Elian was kneeling on the ground on the ground

before him, tightly bound with ropes with the roots of his hair still wet.

Devon pressed his BHP09 to Elian's forehead and snapped, "Tell me! What kind of loathsome, vile method did you use to abduct Dar?!"

"Abduct Dar?"

Elian was at a loss. When had he ever abducted Dar, and how did this get blamed on him? Why didn't they suspect Ezart? He was clearly Dar's favourite...

"So you won't talk." Devon gave a humorless laugh and gave an order to his subordinates, "Bring the torture instruments!"

"Wait! Wait a second!" Elian was alarmed. He hastily begged for help from the bystander, "Mr. Avery! Please save me!"

Theodore adjusted the small spectacles perched on his nose as he sat on the couch and sighed to himself. I can't even ensure my own safety; how could I save you? You better just die peacefully and leave me your corpse for scientific uses...

Devon was picking out his instruments and decided to start with the relatively easy removal of nails. He picked up the pliers, and slowly walked toward Elian with a beatific smile.

At the sight of them, Elian's face turned a sickly pale and he yelled in panic, "Help! Dar, Dar, where are you?"

As if on cue, the sound of the automatic door emitted from the front of the house.

Theodore looked up as Dar came into the room, closely followed by Ezart. He sighed unconsciously. A superior specimen that was so hard to come by had just slipped away...

"Gege!" Daren gawked at the situation in the room and asked, "What's going on...?"

"Dar!" Elian yelled as if the saviour was here to deliver the world and sobbed pitifully, "Please help me! Your brother wants to torture me!"

Daren reflexively moved to shield Elian and asked pitifully, "Gege! What are you doing to Elian-ge? Why did you tie him up?"

Seeing Daren's sad expression, Devon became flustered, "I... I was just..."

"He just didn't want you to marry Elian," Theodore calmly explained.

"HAHAHA! Marriage? Dar and Elian? HAHAHA!" Ezart doubled over with laughter, clutching his abdomen.

"When did I ever say that I was going to marry Elian-ge?" Daren asked flabbergasted.

"But..." Devon was really confused. "You just told me on the phone that

you were getting married,

and you were going to call Elia to go, so isn't it him you were going to marry?"

Daren shook his head and explained, "No, gege, you need two people to witness your marriage, but there was only Ezart there, so I wanted to call Elia-ge to be the second witness."

"Then... You really did get married?" Devon's voice had a strangled edge to it.

"Yeah!" Daren exclaimed excitedly. "I married Xiao Ai!"

Chaos descended in Devon's mind and he yelled, "But, but Xiao Ai, isn't Xiao Ai Elia? He was here the whole time so how could you marry him? Unless Xiao Ai is Eloise...?"

He collapsed against the sofa and broke out in spasms of laughter, almost choking from all the laughter. "Hahahaha, Xiao Ai... Xiao Ai is Elia... Haha... This is too hilarious!"

"No! Gege, Xiao Ai isn't Elia or Eloise!"

Daren rummaged briefly in his bag and pulled out a pink, heart shaped game console. He then loudly announced, "This is my Xiao Ai!"

"What is that?" Devon blankly stared at the heart-shaped device in Daren's hand.

Ezart, who had rolled onto one side with laughter, suddenly sat upright and said seriously, "A dating simulation, nicknamed 'Xiao Ai,' the newest 8.0 version with a function called 'Marriage.' The rules are pretty strict; it requires two witnesses to play along before one can get married... Hahaha!"

Upon saying that, he once again burst into laughter, so much that he flopped onto his side on the sofa.

Theodore pushed up his glasses, picked up his newspaper, and buried his face in it. However, the newspaper in his hands trembled along with his shoulders as he intermittently emitted unusual noises that distinctly sounded like a "Ha~... pfft~..."

At that moment, Elian, who was feeling faint from being tied up for so long, murmured, "That's right... The first time I met Dar, he told me that the dating sim was his girlfriend..."

Devon's head was in system failure mode for a few minutes, before gradually restarting. He grabbed Daren's shoulders fervently and asked, "So you didn't get married?"

"I did!" Daren chuckled and said, "I couldn't find Elian to be my witness, so Ezart got his boss to be my witness and I was able to marry Xiao Ai."

Devon eagerly pressed on. "So you don't have a girlfriend either?"

"Xiao Ai is my girlfriend!" Daren tilted his head. Why is gege acting so

strange today? Why does it feel like he doesn't understand what I'm talking about?

Devon was moved. Great! Dar is still the pure and innocent Dar I've always known. He almost wanted to smother the dating sim with kisses.

"But... I already married Xiao Ai, so there's nothing more to do..."

Daren stared at the device in his hand, and grumbled, "The toystore owner told me that 9.0 was coming out soon, and that you could have children, but I don't know when that would be released."

Seeing that his didi was unhappy, Devon proclaimed at once, "I'll buy that company now and make them release 9.0 immediately!"

"Really?" Daren's eyes shone happily. "Gege is the best!"

Hehehe, didi said that I am the best... Devon smiled giddily. "Dar, you like gege the best, right?"

Daren tilted his head and nodded vigorously, "Of course! Dar likes gege the best!"

He is so adorable! Devon hugged Daren tightly, "Dar, I like you the best too!"

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Theodore, who was watching from the sidelines, snorted. “Normally, if someone heard that his didi’s girlfriend was a device, he would be worried!”

“Hahaha!” Ezart nudged Theodore and snickered, “Hey, when 9.0 comes out, you’ll be a grandfather!”

“.....”

Meanwhile, Elian silently lamented, Will someone untie me please? Urgh... What did I do to deserve this?....

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Volume 2 Extra END  
\*\*\*\*\*

1小愛 (Xiao Ai): Xiao literally means “little”. Can be attached to names as a form of endearment. The “Ai” in Xiao Ai, sounds the same as the “Ai” in Eloise and Elian, although it is written differently.

# Eclipse Hunter v03 Prologue

Translator: Mochipanda

Proofreader: Wryn, Catchkatch, Noobzilla

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In 2105, following the decline of the United Nations, the world was split into hundreds of trading organisations. Enticed by the profits, these organisations merged to form trade cartels, the largest of which was the Solaris Federation. A juggernaut among the groups, Solaris controlled over 30% of the global economy, thanks to the cunning management of the man credited as the most successful leader in the world.

Until leadership passed to Devon Solaris, the Solaris Federation had never even been among the top five trade cartels. Once in command, Devon Solaris' insatiable thirst for power drove him to relentlessly expand his control and thus Solaris prospered.

It wasn't that the growth of the Solaris group went unchallenged; it was that Devon Solaris was always one step ahead of the opposition. He was able to thwart any threat before it was ever realised. It was as if he had an unnatural sense for danger. Those who plotted against him would find themselves effortlessly outwitted. Every rival would curse how they came so close to overpowering him, only to be crushed at the very last moment.

It wasn't just once or twice; it was the same for every attempt. Everyone knew it wasn't just a coincidence, or fate. The answer was simple: Devon Solaris had complete control.

Every opponent who tried to cross him swore to never do it again.

No conspiracy or coup d'état could escape him. His control was absolute and irrefutable.

His very existence was likened to God.

He was invincible.

The people called this legendary existence the 'Solaris Emperor'.

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"Bye Ezart, bye Elian-ge, bye Eloise, bye Eli. See you all tomorrow!"

Standing by the door, Daren waved enthusiastically to the quartet as they departed, smiling with what his brother had dubbed 'the cutest smile in existence'.

Ezart gestured lazily without even looking at Daren.

"Bye, Dar," Elian replied with a broad grin on his face.

"Dar, don't you dare bring those ugly glasses to class!" Eloise ordered, hands on her hips.

Eli only turned his head a fraction and nodded his farewell.

Daren waved one last time, and lingered by the door until he could no longer see his friends. Turning around, he discovered a suave, majestic figure exuding an air of arrogance standing not far behind him. The man's hair was a dazzling blond so bright it was almost blinding.

"Gege!" Daren laughed delightedly.

At the sound of the boy's greeting the man broke out in a warm smile, instantly transforming from an imposing figure to an ordinary, loving older brother.

"Did you have fun today, Dar?" he asked, affectionately ruffling Daren's hair.

"Yep!" Daren nodded enthusiastically, smiling guilelessly like an angel. "I love eating with gege, papa, and my friends!"

Devon, the brother of this pure and innocent youth, gave the appearance of kindness and beauty, but there was no such warmth in his heart. He issued orders to his subordinates with a cold, commanding tone that brooked no argument, as expected of a man of his stature.

After all, Devon was the infamous Solaris Emperor, who ruled the world. Words like 'please' and 'no' were not in his vocabulary, and were unacceptable.

Daren, the boy with the angelic smile, was the Solaris Emperor's younger brother. He was a kind and respectful child, and the only one

who obediently completed his homework in his otherwise misbehaved class at Yelan Academy.

Their father had hated Daren since birth, and in his eyes, Daren was only worth something as a cyborg bodyguard for his older brother.

But even though his father had no love for Daren, his brother did.

With great effort, Devon had managed to save his little brother and swore he would protect the boy's smile and happiness.

In turn, the cyborg youth, who until then had never been exposed to society, was trying his best to be an ordinary boy. He worked hard to adjust to school life, struggled through many challenges, and managed to make some friends. In time, he would learn what it is to be human.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Volume 3 Prologue  
END\*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 1

Translator: Mochipanda, LilsxD, Yihnful

Proofreader: Wryn, Catchkatch, Noobzilla

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Devon took a sip of his coffee and grimaced at the bitter taste. The coffee had been brewed for far too long; it was too bitter even for him, who was accustomed to the taste of black coffee. The acrid taste only served to worsen his already foul mood.

Looking up, he snapped at the conference screen. "I don't care what the public is saying, or what underhanded measures are required; Yue Baylian must be destroyed."

The face on the screen belonged to Kyle, otherwise known as the right hand man and secretary extraordinaire, of the Solaris Emperor.

"However, the Lunariss Alliance has skillfully manipulated public opinion by spreading unfavourable and exaggerated rumours of our tactics. They have even lead the other cartels into believing the Solaris Federation intends to absorb them, with the destruction of the Lunariss Alliance as the first step. Unfortunately, if we were to make a move on the Lunariss Alliance now, other groups may start retaliating."

"Hmph. It seems Yue Baylian is well aware that a mere Lunariss Alliance is unable to withstand my vengeance."

Devon was not surprised by Kyle's report. After all, the Lunariss Alliance

had traversed the economical world for a relatively long time, and was a forerunner among trade conglomerates. It would be unusual if they were unprepared for Devon's retaliation.

Musing, he asked, "What was the public's reaction when my headquarters were bombed?"

"We followed your orders for transparency and made every effort to reveal the suspicious details of the incident to the public. However, the other groups were still reserved about it."

Devon frowned for a moment, quickly deducing the reason.

"I would adopt a conservative approach, too, if I were them. Although our rivals want to take over Solaris Federation's position, killing me is definitely one of the worst ideas. If the economy were to collapse as a result, it would take years to recover. Even if they somehow succeeded in replacing Solaris Federation, their profits might not necessarily be greater than their current revenue.

"And Yue Baylian has always been a skillful strategist, so no one would believe he would be clumsy enough to shoot himself in the foot while trying to assassinate me. And the grudge between the two of us... if even I forgot about it, other people probably did too."

I don't get it. I really don't get it! Devon rubbed his temples. His memory had always been better than most, and even if he was bad at remembering people how could he forget about someone who had been pursuing him for eight years?

A few people had pursued him in the past, but there had never been one who had persisted in courting him for eight years.

"Kyle, you've worked for me for seven or eight years now?" Devon voiced his idea to his secretary. "Do you not have any impression of Yue Baylian pursuing me?"

"Solaris Emperor, even though I've handled many matters for you, that is your personal business, excuse my candidness, but you have always disliked others meddling with your personal affairs," Kyle replied truthfully.

"You're right. Youngsters always dislike others prying into their relationship issues. I regret it now, of course," Devon cursed. "In the future, keep a digital record of all the love letters, gifts, and the like from my suitors," he ordered. "Notify me should any contain a hint of obsession so I can deal with her or him as soon as possible."

"Yes, Solaris Emperor." Kyle nodded slightly, adding another note to his routine tasks.

"We were just discussing the..."

"Gege."

Daren peeked his head in from the doorway. "Are you busy?" he asked hesitantly.

Devon answered with a gentle smile on his face. "Busy? No, it's outside

office hours." He discreetly switched off the conference screen, completely disregarding Kyle, who was still awaiting orders.

Daren bounced into the room holding an ornately carved black box inlaid with red jewels. He placed it on his brother's desk. "Gege, I found this box in your room. What is it? Can I have a look?" he asked, brimming with excitement.

Looking at his little brother's smiling face, Devon smiled. Without even taking a clear look at the box, he answered: "Of course you can. If you like it you can have it."

Permission granted, Daren opened the box with child-like glee. The first thing that caught his eye was a silver BHP handgun, lying among the bits and pieces inside. The model and design was ancient. It was obvious it had several years behind it.

Daren quickly lost interest after playing around with it for a moment. The handgun was nothing compared to the many guns in his room.

He picked up another item from the box; a beautiful, crystal clear, crescent-shaped necklace.

"Is this Gege's necklace?" he asked curiously.

It was only then did Devon realise the box held items of sentimental value to him. He had not recognised it straight away because he hadn't taken the box out in several years.

He stared at it distractedly. It had been a present from his father for his 10th birthday, reputed to be a priceless antique that had been passed down from generation to generation. Initially, his father had been hesitant about giving such an important family heirloom to Devon at such a young age, but eventually he had caved under Devon's constant begging...

"Gege?"

Devon came back to his senses and turned to see his brother's look of confusion. He hastily glanced at the necklace. "No, it's not mine." he replied, shaking his head.

He frowned at the crescent moon necklace before saying "I can't remember whom it belongs... Ah, wait a moment, a crescent moon shaped necklace? Perhaps it was Yuer's necklace."

"Who is this Yuer?"

"That is a long story..."

Devon furrowed his brow, but when he lifted his head he saw Daren looking up at him with wide eyes, the picture of an innocent child waiting to be told a story.

Too cute! cried a voice in Devon's head. Dar! How can you be this adorable?

Thus, the good brother started to tell his story.

"It all started when I began junior high. I had decided to discontinue home schooling in favour of enrolling in a school.

"Back then, I was still young and ignorant. I disliked having a bunch of bodyguards trailing behind me. So, on the first day of school, after taking great pains to lose all my bodyguards and the chauffeur, I walked to school by myself.

"Who would have known that I would get targeted by street thugs and cornered in a dark alley even before crossing two streets?"

"A brat who goes to an elite school like yours should at least have a few thousand dollars on him. Us brothers are a little short on money. How about lending us a few notes? Young Master," the leader of the thugs asked, chuckling menacingly.

A few of the thugs kept stealing jealous glances at Devon's expensive school uniform.

"I don't have any cash on me," Devon answered mildly. He was telling the truth; he never had any cash on him, just a Solaris credit card.

"How could you not have any?" the pissed off street thugs demanded.

"Stop lying," the leader challenged. "I can tell with one look that you're a filthy rich brat."

Devon shrugged his shoulders. "I do have money; I just didn't bring cash. Do you accept credit cards?" he asked.

"...Are you messing with us?"

"No, I would never do that. If you accept credit cards, then hurry up with it. I'm going to be late for class." Devon answered impatiently and wrinkled his brows.

"You little jerk..."

When Devon saw the fist flying towards his face, he raised his eyebrows. "You want to punch me? It just so happens that I've never been punched before. Might as well make an experience of it."

Mid swing, the thug seethed with rage at Devon's arrogant reply. "Good! I'll beat you to death today," he screamed, swinging furiously.

Just before the fist could collide with his face, Devon noticed a shadowy figure through the corner of his eyes charging toward them. He raised his eyebrows without a word, watching calmly as the girl rushed over. She wore a long, traditional skirt, kicking out as she slashed her whip and thrashed the thugs till they cried for their mothers. Sobbing, they scrambled out of the alley.

What a fearless girl. Devon smiled faintly and applauded as though he had seen a brilliant show. "It was really nice watching you. Your fighting style is so graceful, like a dance."

The girl laughed heartily. "You're pretty interesting. You actually want to experience the feeling of being hit?"

"Can't I?" Devon chuckled. "There's always a first for everything."

"Of course you can. How about a taste of my whip?"

"Sure." Devon answered with a smile and leisurely waited for the blow.

The girl raised her whip in all seriousness, but the blow never fell. After a moment, she burst out laughing.

"Forget it," she said. "How can I bear to hit you when you're smiling at me with such a pretty face?"

Devon's smile deepened. "You're pretty too, Yuer."

"Why did you call me 'Yuer'?" the girl asked, a bit surprised.

Devon pointed at the girl's chest. "Because there's a crescent moon on your clothes."

"So that's why... I thought you knew my name," Yuer muttered.

"Huh?"

"Nothing. I can't bring myself to hit you. So, how about we watch others

take a beating? There's a place nearby holding a combat tournament and the preliminary matches are on right now."

Today's the first day of junior high, but... Devon shrugged his shoulders.

"Okay, let's go," he said nonchalantly.

"That was how I met Yuer. After that, every day she sent me flowers, and if I wanted to meet and play with her, I would place the flowers on my windowsill. When night fell, she would be waiting for me at the back gates."

Devon faintly smiled. Those really were crazy times.

They repeatedly stayed out all night, even when they had to attend school and learn the ropes of the business the next day. If it hadn't been for his youthful exuberance and stamina, he definitely would have collapsed.

"I want to meet Yuer-jiejie, too," Daren requested excitedly.

Devon shook his head. "It's impossible. One day Yuer suddenly disappeared. She never sent me flowers again and even when I signalled with my own flowers on the windowsill, she still didn't appear... It was strange."

He lowered his head and murmured, "But from the moment we first met until she disappeared, I don't remember her ever giving me this necklace. Could it be that it's not hers?"

Then have I just recounted my story for nothing?

"Solaris Emperor, please excuse my interruption."

Devon jumped at the sound of Kyle's voice, but Daren reacted swiftly and pressed the button to activate the conference call screen. He cheerfully greeted the other party.

"Kyle-ge, good evening."

"Good evening, Young Master Daren," Kyle cordially returned.

Devon looked at the communication switch and realised he had only turned off the screen and hadn't actually hung up. Kyle must have been waiting patiently during the entire conversation, in case anything else was required of him.

"Kyle, what is it?"

"May I be allowed to inspect the necklace?" Kyle asked respectfully.

Not waiting for Devon's reply, Daren immediately raised the necklace in his hands.

"I'll let you see it, Kyle-ge," the boy said.

Kyle scrutinised the necklace for a moment, quickly concluding, "Solaris Emperor, this necklace is the family heirloom that Yue Baylian gave to you when he confessed."

"What?" Devon frowned as he stared at the necklace. So, Yue Baylian really did give me a necklace?

"Please take a look at this, Solaris Emperor. The traditional dress you believe Yuer wore—was it similar to this?" An image of a traditional Chinese-style robe with a short coat attached appeared on the screen.

"That's right! Yuer wore the same type of dress," Devon confirmed, reminiscing.

"Solaris Emperor, this isn't a dress. This is a traditional robe and buttoned jacket that is worn by men. It is also the traditional clothing worn by Yue Baylian's family."

"What?" Devon Solaris was stunned.

"According to my reasoning, Solaris Emperor, your first love Yuer is Yue Baylian himself," Kyle reported delicately. "However, he wore a traditional robe that may be mistaken as a dress by modern cultural trends, and combined with his feminine appearance, so..."

"Wait a minute!" Devon protested, alarmed. "If he was Yuer how could I not recognise him when he confessed to me?"

"In my opinion, he may have wanted to blend in with social customs, or

create a formal atmosphere when he made his confession. So he approached you in a western suit, and may have cut his hair. Again, excuse me for speaking bluntly, but your powers of recognition have always been less than perfect. Coupled with the fact that you were constantly worrying about Young Master Daren being missing, you were unable to determine that the man confessing to you was actually Yuer."

Devon Solaris frowned, deep in thought.

"Find me a photo of Yue Baylian wearing that... whatever-you-call-it dress!" he ordered.

"Robe."

On screen, Kyle ducked down and punched some buttons. The image of a stunning beauty wearing a glamorous, long, traditional robe appeared on screen. Despite having a beautiful face, it was obvious from his physique that the person was a man.

"Ah!"

The moment he saw the photo, Devon recognised him. This person had a stronger build and was more masculine than the Yuer from his memories, but the similarities in the face were obvious. Devon covered his mouth unconsciously, trying to suppress his shocked exclamation.

Yue Baylian really is... Yuer!

Note:

1月牙儿: pronounced Yue Ya-er, hereby shortened to Yuer. Means crescent moon.



# Volume 3 Chapter 2

Translator: Yihn

Proofer: Arc, Catchkatch

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Devon held onto the black box long after his little brother Dar, the ever obedient child, had already gone to sleep. After a long pause, a sigh finally broke the silence.

"Bill."

"Yes, Solaris Emperor?" Kyle asked. Since he was never the one who pressed the 'end call' button, Kyle was still waiting on the line.

"What do you think I should do?"

Devon held the crescent moon necklace before his eyes, swinging it to and fro. It sparkled like the smile of his first love.

"I do not know."

Kyle kept to his duties and didn't give a response. He understood that it was not in his job description to answer the question. And he knew that the Solaris Emperor didn't really want his answer, he was merely thinking out loud.

"Oh, it all happened so long ago. After hating me for all this time, how

could he possibly forgive me so easily, especially after hearing such a ridiculous explanation?" Devon idly poked at the necklace.

Kyle quietly waited on the other end of the line.

"Punishing him a little for revenge will be fine, but you can forgo the matter of destroying him," Devon said faintly. "I take it that I owe him that much."

"Yes."

Devon pressed a button and ended the call. He gazed at the necklace he'd been holding in his hands for some time, before returning it to the box and closing the lid. But as he caught full view of the box, he could not help staring at it and grazing his fingers gently over the red jewel.

Father...

Devon closed his eyes and slowly reclined in the chair. "Wouldn't it be great if Mother hadn't died, or if you hadn't hated Didi? Then we would have been a happy family..." he murmured.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Bye, Papa Avery. I'm going to school now."

Daren kissed Theodore's cheek. With the haggard look on his face,

glazed eyes, and a cup of coffee in his hands, Theodore would have been arrested for drug abuse if a police officer had caught a glimpse of him.

Ezart yawned widely and examined Theodore. "Has he gone crazy?" he concluded bluntly.

"Papa Avery isn't crazy."

Leaping to Theodore's defence, Daren struggled to explain. "Papa works every day, late into the night. But Gege has given him instructions to wake up early every morning to say goodbye and see me off for school, or Gege will kill him. That's why Papa doesn't have much energy in the mornings."

"Your dad's pretty over the top," Ezart replied disapprovingly. "He's already so old yet he still stays up all night. Your brother, too. Nobody your age says goodbye to their families before leaving for class anymore."

The moment Ezart finished speaking, a certain drug addict suddenly sobered up and looked around.

"Who? Who said that I'm old?" he roared.

"...Your dad woke up."

"En...Bye, Papa Avery. I'm going to school now." Daron embraced Theodore once more.

"Oh, so it's Dar."

Theodore stared blankly at the two students, a little confused. When did I get to the front door? Why do I have no recollection of it at all...? But, for the sake of self-preservation, he bid farewell to Daren just as Devon had instructed. "Be careful on your way to school."

"Let's go already," Ezart declared impatiently, and set off first, using big strides.

Seeing this, Daren anxiously hurried after him, shouting, "I'm coming! Wait for me, Ezart!"

"Teenagers are so full of energy..."

Theodore leaned next to the door, took a sip of his coffee and exclaimed like an old man as he watched them leave, one after the other.

Not long after setting off, the big guy up ahead reverted back to his usual lazy self, slowly taking each step. Daren didn't react in time and had already rushed past him by several meters before realising. He hurriedly retraced his steps and drew up alongside Ezart.

"There's a practical lesson later. Remember to let Dark Sun into the battle simulator; I want to have a battle with him today." Even though Ezart looked as though he was just saying it casually, the sharpness in Ezart's eyes revealed his eagerness to duel with Dark Sun.

"Hmm?"

Caught off guard, it took Daren a while before he remembered. Ever since Ezart, Elian and the others had found out about his identity as Dark Sun, and were threatened by his brother to keep their mouths shut, everybody had simply proceeded to treat him and Dark Sun as two separate individuals.

Daren remained the delicate young master, while Dark Sun was the bodyguard. That was the consensus everyone had reached.

"But, Elian-gege said he wants to fight with me...with Dark Sun today."

"What!" Ezart complained. "Didn't he duel with you last time already?"

"But you had a duel the time before, too..." Daren's voice gradually got softer and softer.

"That's right! So it's decided. It will be my turn this time round. No more grumbling," Ezart said assertively.

"Oh," Daren answered blankly. They continued walking until they passed a toy store. Stopping abruptly, Daren pulled at a corner of Ezart's shirt.

Ezart glanced sideways at Daren, bemused. "What is it?" he asked. "We're going to be late if you don't walk faster."

Pulling his pink, heart-shaped console from his bag, Daren gazed at the shop with sparkling eyes. "I want to buy Xiao Ai's newest software update

that's just been released," he declared.

"...You're still playing with that? And even getting the newest software update?" Ezart looked at the console incredulously.

Daren's face crumpled at his words, portraying a look full of disappointment.

"I can't...buy it...?" he asked, voice small.

Here we go again! I can't refuse him when he looks at me with those puppy-dog eyes! Ezart helplessly face-palmed.

"Anything, anything. If you want to buy it, just do it quickly or we'll be late for class."

"It'll just take a moment. Ezart, you have to wait for me, okay?"

Daren rushed into the toy store as soon as he had consent, knowing that Ezart didn't have the least bit of patience when waiting for others. He had to finish making his purchase quickly or else he'd get left behind.

Once inside the toy store, Daren had intended to pounce on the counter and demand the latest software update, but he was forced to stop when he saw another customer already at the counter. He became flustered and didn't know what to do.

But the sharp-eyed shop assistant recognised this generous customer

and greeted him with a beaming smile. "Is there anything I can help you look for?"

"I-I want this newest program update, the one from the television ads." Daren raised his game console. "Where Xiao Ai can eat gourmet foods from different countries, have makeup and lots of clothes to change into, and can even raise a pet," he recited the lines he had heard from the ads, all in a single breath.

"Virtual Lover 8.0 software update, right? Please wait; I'll get it for you momentarily." The assistant started searching under the counter the second he finished speaking.

"Okay." Daren replied, waiting.

"The Virtual Lover game. Such a childish game really suits you."

Daren was taken aback by the comment, but then he realised it was the customer by the counter who had said it. Even though he had spoken, he hadn't even turned around to face Daren.

"Ah...Shain Baylian, you came here to buy toys, too?"

"I'm buying models!" hissed Shain Baylian. He whipped around and glared at Daren, before giving Daren's Virtual Lover console a look of disdain. "I have no interest in childish toys," he scoffed.

"Models? Is that kind of toy fun?" Daren asked curiously.

"Models are not toys!" Shain Baylain growled in exasperation.

"En?" With a blank look on his face, Daren asked, "But isn't this a toy shop? Doesn't it only sell toys?"

"Of course not, you blockhead! Don't lump together the things I buy with your toys."

"Please, please, don't make a fuss, customers," the shop assistant interjected, hastily trying to mediate the situation while still under the counter. "We are indeed a toy shop, but we sell models as well."

Tilting his head, Daren thought about it for a while, before smiling. "So it's like that. I didn't know toy shops also sold things besides toys," he said.

Hearing this, Shain Baylain rolled his eyes at Daren and stepped away from him. He continued flipping through the catalogues, not wanting to be associated with the boy.

The assistant heaved a sigh of relief when the two customers did not end up quarrelling.

"So, do you want to look at the models, too?" he asked Daren with a professional smile.

I am a little curious...No, I can't! Ezart is still waiting for me outside!

Daren shook his head and pulled out his card to pay the bill. "I'll take a look next time; my friend's waiting for me outside," he quickly replied.

A wide smile spread across the assistant's face when he caught sight of the credit card. Bowing deeply, he said, "Of course, I shall complete the transaction for you right away. If you have the time, feel free to visit and browse the selection of models our toy store offers."

Watching from the side, Shain Baylian gave the assistant a confused look. The level of respect the assistant gave Daren was too excessive; even he had never been treated so reverently. He couldn't help glancing at the credit card the assistant was holding.

With one look, he stared so hard his eyes almost fell out. He simply could not believe that this fool of a boy actually possessed the highest level of Solaris credit cards. Credit cards like this were very rare; less than one hundred cards were in circulation, and each and every one of their owners were famous figures. But this guy in front of him...he wasn't world famous; people at the Academy hardly even remembered him.

An impatient bellow came from outside just as Daren finished signing the receipt.

"Dar, are you done or not?"

"I'm coming, I'm coming!"

Daren grabbed the software disk and his card and rushed to the door.

He suddenly remembered something and paused just inside the doorway. Turning around quickly, he called, "Bye, Shain Baylain!"

Although Shain Baylain kept his face stoic, he nodded his head. After all, he didn't know who was backing this guy, but he was almost certain they were very powerful.

After his farewell, Daren quickly ran out of the store with Ezart's loud voice resounding faintly from outside.

"You're so slow. Today's practical lessons are first and second period. I don't want to show up late; I'll have less time to fight with Dark Sun..."

"It's not going to happen. You always lose to Dark Sun within the first five minutes, Ezart."

"Shut your mouth!"

"Oh, okay."

Dark Sun?!

Shain Baylian rushed out of the toy shop at the sound of that name. But by the time he was outside the topic of Dark Sun had passed, and Ezart and Daren were talking about whether or not to eat supper.

He looked uneasily at the two's backs. "That idiot is actually related to Dark Sun?" he asked himself doubtfully.

Owning that Solaris credit card, one of less than a hundred issued, and associated with Dark Sun...Could that blockhead Daren be related to the Solaris Federation?

Shain Baylian stared at two boy's backs as they walked away. His eyes revealed the whirlwind of thoughts running through his mind.

"Anybody there?" he called quietly, after a long moment.

"Here!"

Three of his followers leaped from the shadows in the street. They bowed their heads respectfully, awaiting orders.

"Old Weirdo, go now and report to Father that I discovered a classmate who may have connections to Dark Sun and the Solaris Federation. Ask him to lend me the newest modified human." Brooding for a moment, he added, "I want a technician, too, to help me modify some things."

"Yes, Young Master." The shortest, ugliest of the three men pressed his fist to his hand, bowed, and left in a flurry.

Shain Baylian lingered outside the toy store for a while more before going inside one last time. He tossed a credit card to the shop assistant.

"Give me a set of the Virtual Lover game. The same model as that brat just now."

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Standing with Ezart at the plaza of the battle simulator, Daren could see from his face that Ezart was bursting with the desire to battle. Daren could only comply.

“Ezart, why don’t you go in first? I’ll come and find you all later,” he said.

“I’ll be waiting for you! In the meantime, I’ll exchange some blows with that woman, Eloise,” Ezart decided, before entering the battle simulator without looking back.

I should find a place to change into Dark Sun’s clothes now, then.

Daren grabbed his school bag and walked to a patch of relatively dense woods inside the campus. There he would remove his uniform, put on his silver visor and become the mysterious pro fighter, Dark Sun.

Elia had already reported to the principal that they could not bring Dark Sun along because he was too skilled for them, and was unwilling to meet with the principal. However, it seemed that the principal refused to give up, installing numerous cameras around the campus just to find out Dark Sun’s whereabouts. Thankfully, Elia and the others had revealed the cameras’ locations to Daren, and had even helped him find a place to change.

Although Daren appreciated their help, at the same time he couldn’t

help thinking that there wasn't really any more need for him to change into Dark Sun...except that Elia and Ezart were both battle maniacs and always asked him to spar with them in the simulator during practicals.

Of course, they couldn't have a duel every practical lesson or it would surely be discovered by the principal that Elia and the others have had contact with him. At the same time, he couldn't enter the simulator with Ezart either, for fear of his connection with Dark Sun being discovered.

Daren became increasingly worried as he thought of all this. "Hopefully other people won't discover that I'm Dark Sun, or Gege will definitely get angry," he said, frowning.

He took off the uniform, revealing the red tights underneath, and put on his silver visor. Stuffing his uniform in his bag, he hid it in the bushes, finishing the procedure of becoming Dark Sun.

"Huu, the expression, expression!"

Daren closed his eyes and smacked his cheeks. Gradually, the innocence in his face disappeared, replaced by...No, there was absolutely nothing replacing it, his face just lost all emotion. Even when they were open, his eyes no longer showed any trace of humanity.

Heartless and cold-blooded, an inhuman person. This was Dark Sun.

The mission: enter the battle simulator and duel with Ezart and Elia.

After confirming his mission, Dark Sun briskly walked out of the woods,

heading straight for the battle simulator. However, before he had gone far, he heard his name being called. At the same time, a crowd had started to follow him. Although they stayed at least ten steps away, Dark Sun did not permit people to follow behind him because that was a place where the eyes could not reach.

With the number of people following him growing larger and larger, Dark Sun finally stopped in his tracks. He felt that they had reached a potential threat level.

He turned around and faced them, contemplating. Although these people had yet to launch any attack, the act of following him had already set off alarm bells in Dark Sun's mind. His instinct was to attack, in order to disperse the crowd...

You can't! They are all my schoolmates; don't hurt them. Daren's thoughts suddenly interrupted Dark Sun's train of thought.

Dark Sun stopped mid-action, silently looking at the crowd. Since he couldn't attack first, he would wait for the opportunity to take action.

The crowd was made up of numerous small groups, murmuring.

"Dark Sun! He turned around."

"Super cool."

"It's Dark Sun; he's finally here. I've been waiting for him for three days. He's really strong in battles."

"I wonder if he'd be willing to sign an autograph for us?"

Dark Sun stood there for a moment, before deciding that the crowd had no intention of attacking or harming him. He turned back and continued to the battle simulator.

But once his back was turned, he immediately sensed someone getting closer. Whipping around, Dark Sun silently extended his steel nails.

"Ex-excuse me. Would you please sign this?"

A timid-looking girl holding a picture walked over. She was so flustered her whole face was red, and a few girls were cheering for her in the background.

Looking at the girl, Dark Sun concluded that her mini skirt and tank top did not leave any room to conceal weapons. Also, her build and muscle development weren't enough to represent a danger to him, and, in his mind, the soft-hearted Daren had already agreed to it. Dark Sun retracted his nails and quietly took the photo, only to see that it was actually a photo of him fighting in the battle simulator.

After signing his name, his handwriting so neat that it looked like it was typed out by a computer, he passed the photo back to the girl.

"Th-thank you!"

Excited and embarrassed, the girl ran back to her group after receiving the photo and the girls giggled hysterically.

Dark Sun immediately turned back to continue on his combat mission. But just as he turned around, he felt someone approaching again. However, this time there was not only one, but several of them. Immediately, the alarm in his head went off and his steel nails extended once more, sharp as knives. As he turned back, he slipped into his combat stance, prepared to engage the enemies.

Standing behind him were approximately thirty people, all holding up a photograph.

"Please give me your autograph!" they requested respectfully in unison.

Dark Sun was rooted to the spot, stunned. Even though he wanted to execute his combat mission the emotional part of the brain once again relented. He could only stop and take the pen and photo nearest him and sign his name, Dark Sun, once again.

Since it's just signing autographs it won't take a lot of time, and I'll go look for Ezart and the others afterwards, Daren thought.

When he finished signing the first photo and raised his head, the thirty people had become a hundred.

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"Dar, that little...!" Ezart furiously punched the wall at his side. "How dare he stand me up!" he roared.

"Even Elian has been summoned by the principal. It's so boring! We should just leave, Eli."

Bored out of her mind, Eloise was sitting cross-legged on the floor, poking holes into the stone floor with her finger.

Eli looked askance at the two of them and then lifted his head and looked at his surroundings. Once it had been a bustling shopping street, but now it looked like a ruin. Because of their restlessness from not seeing Dark Sun, it had suffered devastating damage at the hands of these two, where, of course, the other students in the battle simulator had also perished.

"Let's get out," Eli could only suggest.

"I'm leaving to reckon with that brat Dar," Ezart snorted coldly, ignoring them and leaving by himself.

"Hey! You're not allowed to bully my Dar."

Eloise hastily stood up and hurriedly ran after him while Eli, naturally, could only follow behind.

"I wonder why the principal was looking for Elian?" Eloise asked, after she caught up with Ezart's pace. She turned to Eli. "Moreover, he didn't ask for the two of us. Usually the three of us work together."

"I have no idea," Eli answered honestly.

"Really, what if Elian completes one more assignment than we do? Won't he be graduating earlier than us?" Eloise grumbled, pouting. "No way am I letting him graduate by himself! We have to ask him to help us complete another assignment before letting him graduate!"

"We've already finished one assignment more than him."

"Eh?" Eloise spun around and stared at Eli. "How can that be?!" she gasped.

"Last time, for the mission with Dark Sun where we were only assigned to collect his information, while Elian was assigned to bring Dark Sun to the principal." Eli glanced at Eloise. Apparently his partner hadn't even clearly understood the parameters of the mission. "I reported to the principal that I couldn't read Dark Sun's thoughts, that he wasn't thinking like a human, and that could be counted as having collected Dark Sun's information," he explained.

"So it's like that," Eloise answered blankly. After a moment she cried out. "My goodness! Then wouldn't it be us who needs to help Elian complete an extra mission, then?"

"I don't think he needs our help," Eli stated coldly.

Just as the three of them stepped out of the gym, which was also the giant battle simulator, Ezart, who was walking ahead, abruptly stopped in

his tracks. The two at the rear inadvertently bumped into his back, grimacing in pain as their noses were almost broken by the impact.

"Why did you stop so suddenly?!" Eloise cried angrily while rubbing her face.

"What the hell is this?"

With a strange expression, Ezart pointed straight ahead. Only then did the two of them realise something was wrong. The intensity of the crowd was as per usual, but every one of them was queued up in meandering lines. Something had gone wrong somewhere.

"Wow, there are so many people queuing up! I want to queue up, too!" Eloise started to panic, afraid that it would end before her turn.

"Do you know what this queue's for?" Ezart asked dubiously.

"How would I know? If there's a queue, just line up for it! We might get some amazing things!" Eloise answered naturally. With that said, she abandoned the two of them, rushing to find the end of the queue to line up by herself.

"You..." Ezart was speechless, watching Eloise as she rushed away.

"Dark Sun," Eli said suddenly.

"What?" Ezart turned around and looked at Eli. Why had this enigma

suddenly said 'Dark Sun'?

"They are mostly calling for Dark Sun in their hearts," added Eli.

This queue is because of Dar? Ezart looked at the queue with a complicated expression.

Even though he wanted to investigate how the queue was related to Dar, he had no desire to join the queue, which had no end in sight. Just as he was thinking of simply finding out where the queue started, to cut in or something, Eli started moving forward slowly.

"Where are you going?"

Pointing at Eloise, who had found the end of the line and was waving vigorously at them, Eli made a simple statement. "Queue up together?"

"...I have no interest," Ezart snapped.

Anyway, even if all these people were his enemies, with Dar's skills none of them could harm him. It would be more practical for him to go back to the classroom and have a nap.

Just as he was turning to go, he heard Eli say one word. "Wait."

"What do you want?"

"Elia is calling for me; he's in the crowd." Eli's eyes scoured the crowds in search for his partner.

"El1? Wasn't that guy summoned by the principal?" Furrowing his brows, Ezart glanced at the crowd. Could that guy Elia be queuing, too? That was a bit too ridiculous!

"The principal, mission..." Frowning, Eli struggled to read Elia's thoughts in the crowd, muttering what he could read. "Dark sun...caution."

Hearing this, Ezart and Eloise looked at each other. "The principal's mission is related to Dark Sun this time?" they said in unison.

"He wants us to warn Dark Sun," said Eli, nodding his head. After being partners with him for so long, even with just a few words he could roughly understand what Elia meant.

"But who knows where that guy is! Besides, just relying on Elia still won't grant them the ability to touch Dark Sun."

Ezart remained unconcerned. Elia had challenged Dark Sun many times in the past, which had always ended in failure, failure and more failure, just like him. At most, he could endure for five minutes, while Elia could only endure three minutes.

However, Eli shook his head. "The principal knew Elia couldn't defeat Dark Sun. He wouldn't send him by himself," he explained.

“Even with helpers Dark Sun, that guy that who dislikes fighting, will definitely escape. If he sets his mind on running who could hold him back?”

Hearing this, even Eli nodded in agreement. Dark Sun’s strength was obvious to them.

But now it was Ezart who didn’t want to leave. “But there’s going to be a good show to watch now, so I might as well watch it and then have a nap,” he muttered.

“ ... ”

“Eli, let’s just go. We’ll take a look at the front.” In one swoop, Ezart lifted Eli and started walking to the front of the queue. Lining up? Not a chance!

Seeing them, Eloise stepped out of the queue as well and jogged up to them, all the while scolding. “Hey! Why are you two not getting in line? It’s really rude to cut in line!”

“I’m not even in the queue. Can’t I just watch from the sidelines?” Ezart replied mockingly.

“That...” Eloise frowned. It seemed like nobody would say that was unreasonable.

“Eloise, the principal has once again set a mission with Dark Sun. Elian wants us to go and warn him first,” Eli reported responsibly.

"Ah?" Stunned, Eloise answered with gasp. "Let's go then; the person at the front of this line should be Dark Sun," she said.

"What? How did you know..." Ezart and Eli were startled.

"The people queuing were talking about it. They're queuing for Dark Sun's autograph!"

"Then why were you in line?" Ezart asked in disbelief.

"I want to have his autograph, too! Can't I?" Eloise fanned the five photographs she got, grinning. "You see, these people have even shared some photos of Dark Sun with me. He looks so handsome in it!"

That's not the problem! Dark Sun is obviously Daren, so you could just get him to sign it later, why do you still have to queue... Ezart face-palmed once again.

Eli had no reaction; he was already used to it.

While the three of them were dawdling around, the one caught in the crowd was almost bursting with anger.

What the hell?! I told them to go and warn Dark Sun, yet they're still chatting over there! Elian was on the verge of an aneurysm.

"Your face is becoming so stiff, Elian. You better not drag me down

later!" an icy voice called out.

"I'm terribly sorry. It's just that I'm getting tired of waiting," Elian turned his head and broke into a charming smile. "Will this do? Sin?"

The person next to Elian, sporting a short black haircut and the face of a gentlemen, had such piercing green eyes that it almost looked like they stared right through people. He was as tall as Elian but was more slender, so, it was difficult to tell his gender at first glance.

"Are you two a couple? You look really well-matched!" a young girl asked with a red face.

Her friend discussed the pair. "The girl's so pretty and the guy is so handsome! But the girl seems to be taller..."

Elian broke into a bitter smile. "Ha ha! It's not like that. 'She' is a guy and we're just friends," he explained.

"Wah! Boy-on-boy!"

"Just like a pair of handsome guys you can only find in manga!"

"I wonder who's the top and who's the bottom?"

"It goes without saying. One look and you can tell that the reddish-brown haired one is more masculine; it must be him on top."

"What did you say?!"

Sin dangerously narrowed his eyes coldly. "Did you just say I'm below Elian?" he demanded.

"Don't. Don't get angry. Sin, what they're saying is 'top' and 'bottom', not about who's better in terms of skills!"

Eliau quickly tried to meditate; he couldn't let Sin start a fight. This guy had no idea what mercy was. Once he was provoked he went straight for the kill. He was basically the type of dangerous person who should be locked in jail with a note saying 'Danger! Never to be released'.

"Did you all just say I'm beneath Eliau?" Sin completely ignored Eliau's words; his hands were already resting on top of his weapon, waiting for the moment they replied yes. He would destroy them, together with Eliau.

"You're on top!" the girls replied in unison, under Sin's dangerous glare and Eliau's constant discouraging winks.

Seeing this, Eliau could finally breathe a sigh of relief.

"Hnn! I am indeed the strongest." Sin shifted his hands away from his weapon and glared at Eliau, before declaring, "No matter if it's you or Dark Sun, I'll always be above you all!"

The girls looked at him, eyes shining with admiration. One after the other, they started talking about it.

"Whoa! He even wants to fight Dark Sun!"

"Is it a love triangle?"

"Or is it one tackling two?"

It's not worth fighting over! Sin, you totally don't understand what the girls mean by 'above' and 'below'... Elian felt like crying even more now.

"Spotted the target! Hey! You better not drag me down."

Sin sneered at Elian, and in a blink of his eye his expression softened. His eyes were no longer as piercing as they had been; they became just as captivated as the surrounding admirers', changing instantly from a terrifying person to an avid fan.

"Sin! You have to keep in mind that the principal does not want Dark Sun to be killed," whispered Elian.

"Shut up!"

Elian smiled bitterly. Perhaps, by asking him to be Sin's partner, the principal basically just wanted him to prevent Sin from killing Dark Sun, instead of assisting Sin in attacking Dark Sun.

After all, this guy, Sin, was most adept at assassination.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c02 END \*\*\*\*\*

1 Note: 'El' is a nickname for Elia.



# Volume 3 Chapter 3

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How come Ezart and the others still haven't come over to warn Dark Sun? Elian thought desperately.

At the least, Dark Sun has already signed over one or two hundred photographs. After all that, regardless of how sharp his awareness might be, I'm afraid he's bound to have let his guard down. Not to mention, the principal is pretty sneaky.

Right after he saw the situation going on in the plaza, the principal had called Sin and him urgently. He had even created a chance for them to go undercover as a part of the crowd to find the best chance to launch a surprise attack.

He looked around his surroundings. Sin and he weren't the only ones there. There were many others from the Elite Combat Section lying low, all of them ready to surround and ambush Dark Sun, closing off any opportunity to escape. It seemed like the principal had put quite a lot of money into this.

"Please sign this for me!"

By now Sin had already worked his way to the front of the line, right in front of Dark Sun. Dark Sun was the same as usual, never showing any

emotions. In comparison, Sin was smiling and holding up a huge autograph board and pen to give Dark Sun.

Is Sin planning on ambushing Dark Sun while he signs the autograph?

Elian furrowed his eyebrows. That is definitely a good opportunity... After all, if you're signing an autograph your concentration would be on writing and nothing else. The large autograph board also helps block Dark Sun's vision. Seeing this, if I really let Sin's ambush succeed, allowing Dar to be injured, then this situation could really become dangerous. In any case, I haven't forgotten that the person supporting Dar from the shadows is 'that person'.

I have to think of a way to warn Dark Sun...God! Haven't those three come over yet!?

However, before Elian even had the time to confirm it, he saw Dark Sun reach out his hand to receive the autograph board in Sin's hands. It was impossible for him to warn Dark Sun directly, since the principal was definitely using cameras to observe the developing situation. If by chance he informed Dark Sun, he would definitely be closely watched by the principal afterwards, making the state of affairs even worse.

As Elian was in a bind, Dark Sun's hand reached out but stopped just before taking Sin's autograph board. Instead, he slowly raised his head and looked at Sin and Elian with his face maintaining no expression whatsoever. This made it impossible for him to discern what Dark Sun's actions meant.

Did he notice there's something wrong? Elian thought delightedly.

He opened his mouth and said in a flat voice, "You guys..."

"Dark Sun!"

Dark Sun stopped mid-sentence and turned his head towards the direction of the voice. It was Eloise's voice, so Dark Sun—or rather Dar—turned his head and looked towards it without thinking. He saw Eloise, Ezart, and Eli running towards him. Eloise looked panicked, and even Ezart was frowning.

Oh, no! I forgot about our meeting... Dar became flustered, and, in that moment, Dark Sun's personality changed to Daren Solaris.

Now!

Sin's face still wore a smile but this time he silently kicked out the knife in his shoe and charged towards Dark Sun, successfully piercing his knee...

Seeing Dark Sun's figure immediately stoop down, he felt exhilarated. I actually got him!

"Ha!"

Sin haughtily laughed at his accomplishment and in that same moment he ruthlessly charged towards Dark Sun's other leg. But Dark Sun had already been tipped off by the last attack. He dodged to the side in a

flash, but because of the effects of his knee injury, Sin managed to draw a streak of blood on his thigh.

This is bad! With one of his knees damaged, Dark Sun won't be able to use his superiour movement to deliver attacks. Elian's face paled. Like this, with me and Sin's joint attack on Dark Sun, coupled with the other members of the Elite Combat Section surrounding them...even if it's Dark Sun, there's no escape!

Just then, the campus loudspeakers suddenly announced a broadcast.

"Good afternoon, students. I am Principal Antonias. We are now undergoing a battle exercise with the Elite Combat Section. If you are not an Elite Combat Section student, please do not join the battle, and leave the plaza's central circular space."

The students began chattering and grumbling. "What's happening? It took me so long to work my way up to the front!"

However, under the orders of the principal, everyone obediently left the central space and went to stand at the rear of the plaza to watch.

At this moment, the Elite Combat Section students hidden in the crowd came out. They broke into pairs and formed a circle, each team standing at the hour marks of a clock. There were twelve pairs, so with Sin and Elian in the middle, it made a grand total of twenty six people.

"T-t-the entire Elite Combat Section...has been mobilised?" Elian gasped as he looked around him.

Including Eloise and Eli, there would be twenty eight people. Even though they were still missing two people, those two were rumoured to be in the middle of a secret mission. No one in the Elite Combat Section had seen them before.

The principal relayed more orders. "Eloise and Eli, move to the team in the 3 o'clock position. Ezart, leave the central space."

Ezart frowned. Seeing Dark Sun's injured knee and the surrounding members of the Elite Combat Section, numbering twenty eight and more students, he snorted.

"Interesting. I've always wanted to fight against the Elite Combat Section and see who's stronger!" he said.

After he finished speaking, he stubbornly remained in the middle of the plaza, pounding his fists eagerly with hands already equipped with battle gloves.

Elian secretly cheered on Ezart's actions. But clearly the principal was prepared for something like this happening. The loudspeaker sounded again.

"Any students not belonging to the Elite Combat Section who choose to remain in the centre of the plaza after the next ten seconds will be expelled!"

Ezart and Elian were both startled by the words, especially Ezart, who

was suddenly undecided about whether he should leave.

Regardless of the order, the battle in the plaza couldn't wait ten more seconds. Sin had already unleashed his attack. His leg moved so fast that it left an afterimage. The knives attached to the front of his shoes were extremely sharp and so deadly that Dark Sun was forced to use his injured leg to handle the superior speed he needed to dodge the attack. But, because of his leg injury, his ability to evade attacks properly was compromised several times and he was forced to use his hand to block.

Dark Sun's nails had been extended long ago, sharp as knives. While he was blocking Sin's leg attack, he planned to use his nails to attack his leg and hinder his opponent's movements. During one of Sin's attacks, Dark Sun clawed and destroyed the fabric of the pants covering his shin. But what he heard was not the sound of a sharp knife slicing through flesh, but the sharp, ear-piercing sound of steel clashing and scraping against steel.

In the end, after several sharp and piercing sounds rang out, the two men engaged in battle broke apart. Sin began laughing hysterically. On the other hand, Dark Sun remained unaffected, with no expression on his face.

Everyone focused their eyes on the situation. On the floor lay a few long, broken nails with sparkling metal fragments on them. Everyone looked at Sin's leg in shock. But they didn't see the skin dripping with blood they expected. Instead, they saw a plated boot. Apparently Sin didn't only have a trick in the toe of his boots; it turned out that the entire boot was a weapon. And, looking at Dark Sun, they could see that his left hand had three broken nails. The two fingers that were unaffected were the two that couldn't deal damage by themselves: the ring finger and the pinky.

Against the thick and solid plate boots, Dark Sun's nails were just too thin. There was no way to pierce it, which was clear from the fact that they broke in their first encounter.

Sin didn't give Dark Sun a moment to breathe. He immediately rushed in to attack. This time, Dark Sun decided not try to fight him head on. He chose to let loose his superior speed to dodge the attack. If it really became impossible for him to avoid the attack outright, he would evade the knife and proceed to attack Sin's flank, aiming for his calf. But it didn't matter whether he used his speed to dodge or if he used his instantaneous movement to avoid the knives' attacks, it was obvious that it increased the stress on his injured leg. If he were a normal person he would have been rolling on the floor writhing in pain already. However, he didn't even let out a whimper of agony. To the spectators, the two that were battling before them didn't seem really human at all...

As the two in the middle were engaged in a heated battle, on one side Ezart had reluctantly moved towards the outside of the grounds under the threat of being expelled if he had not left after ten seconds. He stood firmly in place at the boundary between the inside and outside grounds, with his eyes focused on the battle going on before him.

Elian's face turned white. He never thought that Dark Sun would actually be lose. The surprise attack at the beginning had affected his abilities too much. Dark Sun had always relied on his perfect and accurate movements as the basis for his attacking and dodging. Therefore, the moment his joints were injured, it affected Dark Sun much more than it would others.

By now Eloise and Eli had already moved to the 3 o'clock position. Their

faces paled as they watched the battle scene unfold before them, but they didn't know what they could do to help the situation.

Then, a moment later, Eli suddenly froze for a second. He lowered his voice and whispered to Eloise. "Dark Sun he...he's talking to me..."

"What? What did Dar say?!" Eloise asked frantically.

"Avery, Scythe, Reaper."

"What's that? I only understood the Avery part. He's Dar's Dad, right?" Eloise said, furrowing her eyebrows.

"Eloise, call me so I can pretend to pick up and then leave to make a call and inform Avery of this," Eli whispered.

"Okay."

As soon as Eloise finished listening to his instructions, she secretly reached her hand into her pocket and dialled Eli's number on her phone. Before long, Eli's phone rang. He apologised to the students of the Elite Combat Section near him and walked to the side. Of course he wasn't answering a phone call but instead hurriedly calling Dar's house.

At the same time Eli was making a phone call, Sin hastened Elian to take action. "What are you doing? Hurry up and come aid me!"

Hearing Sin rush him, Elian's heart skipped a beat. However, on the

surface, he presented a calm demeanour. "I thought that you wanted to have a one-on-one battle with Dark Sun. Didn't you want to prove that you're stronger than Dark Sun?" he asked.

"If you win, then you're strong. Whether it is one-on-one or being surrounded by numerous enemies," Sin said impatiently.

This guy has no fighting spirit at all! Elian secretly scolded him in his mind.

Nevertheless, he could only bear this and move to flank Dark Sun. Otherwise Sin and the principal would definitely begin to doubt and suspect Dark Sun's and his relationship. Then Daren would be suspected, since he was always hanging around them but right now he hadn't appeared at all. Additionally, Daren and Dark Sun had the same hair colour; it would be difficult for them not to notice the similarities.

Dark Sun and Daren Solaris were the same person. The only reason this hadn't been discovered yet was because no one had compared the two. The moment that they were suspected to be the same person and were measured up against each other, he would definitely be exposed. After all, they were the same person. Whether it be their hair colour or body shape, they were exactly the same.

At that moment, Dark Sun drew back and turned his head to look at Sin and Elian coming towards him. Just when Sin dashed in to attack, not caring about any consequences or responsibilities, Dark Sun opened his mouth.

"I'll see the principal."

The second he spoke, the broadcaster blasted through the speakers.  
"Stop, Sin!"

The leg that Sin was using to kick Dark Sun stopped abruptly, with the toe of his shoe only ten centimeters away from Dark Sun's face. Although his leg had stopped moving, his facial expression couldn't keep up, making his cool face to look distorted. It looked like he was forced to suppress the fiery battle spirit in his heart. But, in the end, he still slowly lowered his leg back to the ground.

"Elian and Sin, bring Dark Sun to the principal's office."

"Yes," the two replied in unison. The only difference they showed was that Elian's face was smiling and Sin's was sullen.

As for Dark Sun, after he finished speaking he didn't open his mouth again. As Elian moved forward towards Dark Sun, displaying an inviting gesture with his hand, Dark Sun silently followed behind, while Sin followed behind him.

The Elian walking in the front may have been smiling on the surface but on the inside he was desperate to find a way out of this.

The moment Dark Sun enters the principal's office, like a tiger's lair, he would unquestionably have no chance of escaping. And the principal doesn't like taking no for an answer. Looking at how he deployed the whole of the Elite Combat Section in order to capture Dark Sun, it's obvious that he wants Dark Sun no matter what.

The principal wants to possess Dark Sun...But Dark Sun only listens to the Solaris Emperor's words. God, please don't let this lure the Solaris Emperor out. Otherwise the situation will become more serious than I can even imagine. The Solaris Emperor's wrath is not something little Yelan Academy can take on.

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Ring...Ring ring...

Avery was currently in his science lab. His experiment had progressed to a very important stage. He carefully dropped one drop of the brown liquid onto the petri dish that had a kind of meatball-looking, unknown substance squirming around on it. The instant the liquid dropped onto the meatball, it stopped squirming around for a second and then immediately began to wriggle around crazily.

Ring ring...

"It seems like that was too high a dosage..." Avery stared unblinkingly at the meatball struggling. His facial expression revealed a bit of his vexation.

Bang!

The meatball in the petri dish struggled wildly for quite a while before it suddenly exploded, causing tiny pink pieces of meat to spray all over

the experiment table.

Ring ring...

"This is really troublesome...It seems like this drug's effect may be too strong. It can only be used once on the parental substance and then the substance will be destroyed. I don't know how I should change it. Should I decrease the dosage amount or weaken the drug's concentration? I wonder what would lessen the damage to the parental substance..."

Ring ring...

Ring ring? What does that mean? Avery stood there dumbfounded, wondering what it was. Then, after thinking for a while, he finally remembered.

"Ah! It's the phone ringing!" he exclaimed.

It's not Devon calling home, right? Avery's face darkened suddenly at the thought.

He immediately rushed out of the isolated science lab, not realising that he was still holding the measuring glass in his hand. He dashed into the adjoining room and picked up the phone in a flash.

"Hello! This is Avery speaking."

"Uncle, you finally picked up the phone..." Although Eli wasn't sure

anymore if there was any use in him picking up now.

"Unc-what?!" Avery's face twisted for a moment. Uncle? I'm only in my early 30s! How could I be called an uncle!?

"Uncle, Dark Sun's in trouble."

"Idiot, call me Big Brother...What? Something happened to Dar?" Avery's heart jumped in fright. Why has something happened again?

Eli briefly informed him about the situation. "In the end his heart's voice conveyed Uncle's name and the words 'scythe' and 'reaper'."

"Call me Big Brother!" Avery frowned. "I understand. I'll come immediately; meet me at the school gates."

"Okay," Eli replied simply and hung up.

After disconnecting, Avery hurriedly raced upstairs to where Daren's weapon exhibitions room, battle training site, marksmanship training site, and more were located.

He scanned everything to his left and right and quickly found the suitcase containing the Reaper's Scythe. When he reached his hand out to grab the case he finally realised that he had been so frantic that the measuring glass he had been holding was still firmly grasped in his hand, the brown liquid inside it swirling around.

Luckily it didn't spill...He put the glass down and proceeded to pick up the Reaper's Scythe while talking to himself.

"Dar's school life sure is colourful! It seems like Devon has been going about this too carelessly. His brother never had the potential to be a normal person."

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Dark Sun was silent. During the whole incident he had only said he would be willing to see the principal, and then had quietly left, following Elian and Sin. No one in the crowd had any idea what he was thinking, causing some to even think that maybe he had chosen to slaughter the principal directly instead.

In truth, this decision was not chosen using Dark Sun's rational thinking but using Daren Solaris, who acted according to his emotions.

Dar's reasoning was extremely straightforward and simple. He believed that as long as he clarified things with the principal, that he told him he only followed his brother, and that he refused to join the Elite Combat Section, then everything would be solved and the principal won't look for him again. However, Dark Sun only thought of this as his last resort. If the other side refused to surrender it would be quite difficult for him to get out of the situation, considering the damage his knee joint had suffered and the fact that he didn't have the Reaper's Scythe with him.

But his emotions won out against his logical reasoning. Daren stubbornly thought that it would be okay as long as he explained

everything to the principal. He believed that the principal wouldn't force him to do things against his will. As his rational thinking and emotive side came to completely different conclusions, Daren chose to follow his brother's words and went with his emotions.

This was the reason Dark Sun obediently followed Elia and Sin to the principal's office. He had no idea that he had made Elia and Eli worried to death. Elia was intimately familiar with the principal's personality; he wasn't the type to easily give up in any situation. If Dark Sun were to enter the principal's office it would be practically impossible for him to leave.

At that moment, Eli was troubled by the fact that he had finally reached Avery, but, now that Dark Sun was about to enter the principal's office, he and Eloise had no way of actually getting Avery to the principal's office.

This is too terrible! everyone thought.

But Dark Sun wasn't aware of their worries at all. He followed Elia all the way to the principal's office. Actually, instead of an 'office', it was more like an entire building. On the surface, this building was the Elite Combat Section's classroom, but everyone knew that the Elite Combat Section never went to class. Therefore, this building was actually the principal's office, delegated for giving the Elite Combat Section missions.

The three of them entered the building one after the other. The entire building's security was extremely tight, as it was only possible to go in with the special cards held by Elite Combat Section students. Elia took out his card and swiped it. After that, he pressed his thumb to the fingerprint recognition device, and only then did the building's large door open.

The moment Dark Sun stepped into the building he naturally scanned his surroundings. He noticed that just the entrance and the lounge had at least ten security cameras, which could rotate three hundred and sixty degrees. There were many cameras out in the open, and many hidden. And, looking at them, it didn't seem like the building's walls were made out of normal reinforced steel and concrete.

Instinctively, Dark Sun wanted to escape while the door was still open, but this was once again prevented by his emotions.

Thus, the three finally arrived at the highest floor, consisting of the principal's office. Once the door opened to the principal's office, Dark Sun once again saw the Principal Antonias who had appeared when he first entered the battle simulator. He was sitting next to a coffee table, leisurely pouring tea. The second he saw Dark Sun and the others, he immediately smiled broadly.

"Dark Sun! You're finally here! I've been waiting for you for so long!" Antonias greeted him happily. "Come here and sit down! Let this old man see what a handsome young man you are!"

But Dark Sun stood quietly at the entrance. If it was possible, Dark Sun wanted to quickly explain everything to the principal and then leave. He was planning to do exactly that.

"I have a Master. I don't want to enter the Elite Combat Section and I request to take my leave."

" ... "

It wasn't only Principal Antonias who was shocked. Even Sin, who was always eccentric and behaved oddly, looked sideways at Dark Sun. This guy's fighting capabilities are completely inversely proportional to his speaking ability, he thought.

Elian didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Dar... he thought. When you don't say anything, you're only seen as cold and indifferent, but the moment you open your mouth people can immediately recognise that there's something wrong with you...

"Don't be like that. Is it too much to ask for you to sit down and have some tea with this old man?"

As expected of the principal, he only stood there dumbstruck for a moment before he regained his composure and quickly changed to a face full of smiles. Still beaming he tried to pull Dark Sun over, but Dark Sun evaded him by dodging to the side. If it wasn't necessary Dark Sun didn't want to have any physical contact with anyone, since it could be extremely dangerous. Additionally, after being surrounded by Sin and the others earlier, he had become extra cautious about these things.

"Just sit down, Dark Sun. I mean, it's not like you can leave at the moment, correct?" Antonias said cheerily, glancing down at Dark Sun's knee. Although the blood had already dried, his wound still looked rather hideous.

Before, in the plaza, if it weren't for his wound Dark Sun would have chosen to turn and run, rather than remain entangled in a fight with Sin. But, considering the circumstances, with his knee being wounded Dark

Sun's speed had taken a heavy blow. It was highly probable that Sin would have taken the chance and executed a crippling blow to him if he were to turn his back. He hadn't had the choice of turning around to flee back then.

The situation at hand had become much more disastrous. This room was perfectly enclosed from the inside while Sin and Elia guarded the door, so the only way to escape was to perhaps capture the principal and use him as a hostage to force Sin and Elia to move out of the way.

Sit down and listen to what the principal has to say first! Daren Solaris shouted persistently in his heart.

So Dark Sun decided to sit down. The principal smiled as he followed and even passed a cup of tea to him. Naturally, Dark Sun didn't appreciate his actions and the cup of tea sat on the table untouched.

"I wonder who has the wonderful good luck of being able to hire such an amazing fighter as you," Antonias said, not minding Dark Sun's rude gesture one bit. He spoke as if he were an old neighbourhood man talking to a teenager.

He didn't know what Antonias was planning, so Dark Sun made sure to watch his every movement.

"I have nothing to say," he was his only reply.

"Why did you come to Yelan Academy? It wasn't really to use the battle simulator, right?" Antonias chuckled a bit. "A fighter like you should be

really busy, right?"

However, Dark Sun ignored Antonias' speech. "What do you want?" he asked in a straightforward manner.

"You really do get straight to the point." Antonias sighed in admiration. He stopped his gentle and warm act, and switched to the demeanor of a businessman.

"Then I won't waste our time with small talk. Ten missions. If you can do ten missions for me, you won't need to pay school fees and I will give you your graduation certificate. All graduate students of the Elite Combat Section in Yelan Academy are given the highest priority when they are entrusted with missions to complete for the school. Don't you think these conditions are excellent?"

Nevertheless, Dark Sun didn't show any reaction.

"These conditions are really very good. The other Elite Combat Section students have to carry out thirty missions in order to graduate. If they were to fail a mission, they would have to carry out three additional missions as well. But I believe that you will not fail any, so I won't add that condition."

"No," Dark Sun rejected his offer without even considering it.

"If you have a certificate from Yelan Academy as a graduate of the Elite Combat Section, it's practically guaranteed that wherever you apply for as a bodyguard, you'll definitely get a position as team leader at the very

least.”

At this moment Elian, who was standing near the door, showed a strange expression.

Headmaster! he really wanted to say. The conditions you’re offering are really good but unfortunately the person in front of you is the Solaris Emperor’s younger brother. The Solaris Emperor’s doting affection for Dar has already reached the point that, no matter what Dar wants, he will give it to him. How could Dar possibly care about a graduation certificate or special privileges? In this world, I don’t think there is anyone who would dare to hire the Solaris Emperor’s younger brother as his bodyguard, right?

“No.” Dark Sun remained firm in his decision.

By this point principal Antonias seemed at his wits end. He raised his offer again.

“Eight missions; the other conditions remain the same.”

“No.”

“Six! I can’t give you any fewer than that,” Antonias said his limit in one breath. This should be around the number of missions the Academy has been delegated that students have failed because of the high level of difficulty.

Dark Sun said each word distinctly to make his point clear. “I only listen

to my current master's orders."

Antonias didn't seem to know the meaning of rejection; he continued bargaining, trying to persuade Dark Sun.

"It doesn't matter. I'm not in any rush. When does your contract as a bodyguard end?"

Dark Sun remained silent for a moment. "When I die," he replied.

His words stunned Antonias, and he didn't know how to respond.

Even Sin couldn't help but clap his hands, thinking how admirable it was. How straightforward!

"You can't accept any other jobs?" the principal asked, refusing to give up.

He had no choice. Some assigned missions were much too dangerous and difficult for students to undertake. But if he didn't get them completed, then Yelan Academy's reputation would fall rapidly. Now that he had actually found a student with the same fighting capabilities as Sin he couldn't just let him go. He had to try his best to persuade him. If he and Sin were to work together on a mission nothing would stand in their way, no matter how difficult the mission may be.

Even if it was Antonias, if Dark Sun were to reply straight away with the word 'no' the principal knew he wouldn't be able to sway him. Then today's events would most likely come to an end. But, unexpectedly,

influenced by his emotions, Dark Sun hesitated. He had qualms about whether or not he should lie to the principal.

This second of uncertainty gave Antonias a chance to realise that it wasn't that Dark Sun wasn't able to do side jobs, but just that he wasn't really willing to.

"Five missions. And I won't ever investigate your private matters, and I will remove the surveillance cameras I installed within the Academy."

Dark Sun thought about it. If it was like that, then it wasn't like he couldn't do it. If the principal stopped investigating Dark Sun's true self then that would make Daren Solaris much safer. After all, if he were to continue monitoring Dark Sun there was a high probability of the principal finding out that Daren Solaris was actually Dark Sun.

Dark Sun chose to accept, but with one condition. "The missions that I don't want to accept, I won't accept."

"It's a deal!" Antonias hurriedly promised.

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"Dar, is it all right for you to accept the principal's missions?" Elian asked worriedly.

A line of people stood at the school gates waiting for Avery, who was

about to arrive to pick up Daren Solaris and go home. As for the reason why he was leaving early...it was to give Avery time to fix up Daren's knee wound before Devon noticed, of course, thus avoiding the calamity of all the Yelan Academy students never being able to come to class again.

By now Dark Sun had already reverted back to the appearance of Daren Solaris. "It should be all right. As long as...Gege doesn't find out," he replied quietly.

This response really makes us feel very worried! everyone thought, laughing bitterly inside.

"Your dad is here," Ezart said lazily, pointing towards the school gates.

Everyone's eyes followed and they looked over. There, an extremely desperate Avery got out of a taxi with a large suitcase held in his hands. As he jumped out of the taxi he naturally looked toward the school gates and found a line of people there, including Daren.

Seeing a seemingly safe and sound Daren, Avery stood there confused, clutching the case.

Elian patted Daren Solaris' back. "Hurry up and go over. Your father must have been so worried," he said.

"Yes!" Daren Solaris turned his head and said his goodbyes with a smile. "Goodbye Ezart, Elian-ge, Eloise, and Eli."

"Goodbye, Dar..." everyone said one after another.

Suddenly Eli's expression changed. "Uncle! Danger!" he shouted.

Everyone was a bit stunned, not really understanding what Eli was talking about. The only one who reacted immediately was Eli's partner, Eloise. The moment she heard Eli's words, Eloise instantly ran towards the grounds outside the school, where Avery was standing.

"Huh?"

Avery was suspicious as he saw Eloise suddenly rushing towards him. His suspicion didn't last long, however, as a motorbike zoomed up right in front of him. There were two people on the bike and they were both clad in leather jackets, leather pants and full face protective helmets, making it impossible to see their faces.

Then the person sitting at the back punched Avery in the stomach, making him pass out. The rider grabbed him with one arm, using his other hand to hold the suitcase that was in Avery's hands.

"Hya!"

Eloise had finally reached them, and without further ado she used all her strength to kick the rear rider's side, hoping to kick him off the motorbike. The kick definitely hit him straight on, and, with her power, even if it was an elephant he should have fallen off. But the rider didn't move an inch, instead gunning the accelerator as though he were unaffected.

The moment he gunned it, the motorbike sped away like lightning. Eloise chased after it for a few steps but soon realised that it was impossible for her to catch up. She was forced to unwillingly give up.

"Papa Avery!"

At that moment Daren sped after them, refusing to give up chasing after the motorbike. This burst of intense movement made the wound on his knee instantly open up, making blood flow down his calf and onto the street, spilling as he continued running after them.

Elian hurriedly rushed up and grabbed hold of Daren, stopping him from going any further.

"Dar, don't chase after him. It's impossible to catch up."

"No!" Daren said, struggling with all his strength. "Papa Avery has been captured! I need to rescue him!" he shouted.

"Dar.." Looking at his frenzied and frantic manner, Eloise also felt desperate, wondering how she should comfort him.

Smack!

Ezart slapped Daren hard in the face. It had so much power that Daren immediately fell to the ground on his bottom. As Daren sat on the ground, he couldn't quite believe he had been hit. He held back his tears and raised his head, looking at Ezart with a dumbstruck expression.

But Ezart shouted down at him instead. "What are you looking at me for? Hurry up and call your brother; that would be more useful in this situation! Call him right now!"

"Oh. Okay."

Daren quickly reached for the phone in his bag and punched in his brother's number. The moment it went through, he shouted in tears. "Gege, Gege!"

"Dar! What's wrong? What happened?" Hearing Dar's cries, Devon became flustered.

"P-Papa Avery has been captured!"

The phone went silent for a minute. "Are those four classmates by your side?" Devon asked.

"They're here..." Daren replied, wiping away his tears.

"Push the loudspeaker button. I need to speak with them."

"Okay," Daren said obediently, pushing the button.

"The four of you will immediately take Dar home and guard him closely. Don't leave him for a single moment, and don't leave the house."

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c03 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 4

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Half protecting and half shepherding, the four forcefully escorted Daren home. Not long after, Devon Solaris also arrived, entering through a secret tunnel into the living room, only to find his brother curled up on the couch, bawling his eyes out. Elian, with a bowl of clear water, was cleaning the blood from Daren's thigh and knee.

Seeing Dar's tears and the bloody tracks on his legs, Devon's heart constricted in sorrow and in anger. Sorrow at Dar's reddened eyes, and anger at how, despite being under his protection, Daren was made to cry once again. It didn't matter if it was Avery's kidnappers or his own clumsy, ineffective self; everyone deserved to die.

"Gege!"

Daren, finally noticing that his brother had come home, sprung up and leaped into Devon's arms, crying.

"Gege, Papa Avery– h-he's been kidnapped!"

Devon nodded, tenderly wiping away his brother's tears with a handkerchief.

"Don't worry Dar. Theodore will be back soon," he replied.

"I'm okay, Gege," Daren tried valiantly to wipe away his tears. "Don't mind me. Hurry and rescue Papa!"

"It'll be okay, just you see. Bill is already searching for clues."

Devon frowned. The situation wasn't hard to understand. The kidnappers were most likely Yue Baylian's men. Only he could have discovered Avery's existence from the cyborg incidents.

To think, just as he was about to go easy on Yue Baylian and let him be, something like this happened. The Solaris Emperor chuckled coldly. Had his way of doing things been too lax lately, soft to the point where people had forgotten where the Emperor's cruel and ruthless reputation came from? Heh...

Elian and the others felt a chill creep down their backs as they heard the Solaris Emperor laugh.

"Dar, Hurry up and give your brother a hug so he'll stop laughing like that," they whispered quickly to Daren.

"Oh?" Daren didn't understand. Was the way his brother smiled weird? He often laughed like that... But since everyone asked him to, Daren went and embraced his brother obediently.

The hug did indeed recapture Devon's attention, and the chilling grin disappeared immediately, replaced by a gentle smile as he patted his brother's head.

"Do not worry. I have sources everywhere in this city. They won't be able to take a step without me knowing. You just stay quietly at home and wait for news, okay?"

Hearing this, Dar asked in a small voice, hesitating, "Gege, I can help. Last time, too, I..."

"Last time?" Devon asked with an even bigger smile. "You mean the time you had Avery and Bill keep me in the dark while you snuck out to destroy the cyborg manufacturing laboratory, nearly making me send them to meet Satan himself?"

"..." The group had a moment of silence for those two unfortunate souls.

Daren bowed his head; he almost couldn't face his brother.

"Don't worry, Dar. It's not for nothing that I am called the Solaris Emperor. No matter who the opponent is, this time I won't let them go until I have destroyed them and everything around them." Devon said matter-of-factly.

"I don't want anyone destroyed. I just want Papa Avery to come back..." Daren replied in a tiny voice.

"I will have Bill prioritise Avery's rescue over everything else."

Daren nodded his head, but he was still very concerned. His brother

was always pointing a gun at Papa; their relationship was always difficult. Devon really didn't act like he would try very hard to save Avery.

"Daren, you stay at home. I will have my people guard this place." Devon set his hands down on Dar's shoulders and repeated earnestly, "This time, you are not--I repeat not--to run around outside. I forbid you from using Dark Sun's identity to kill, and I also forbid you from getting hurt. Do you understand?"

Under his brother's stern gaze Daren could only nod in agreement, even if he did want to sneak away and rescue Avery.

"I understand, gege."

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The first thing Avery became aware of when he woke was the pain in his abdomen, then the ache throughout his whole body. He'd only just thought of shifting his position when he discovered he couldn't move an inch. Evidently, he had been tied up, and, judging from the coldness pressed against his wrists, it was with something metal. He opened his eyes but could see nothing but darkness. He'd also been blindfolded, then.

"Although we X-rayed you and have determined that there are no enhancements to your body, it is still better to err on the side of caution. Wouldn't you agree, Doctor Avery?"

Avery turned towards the voice instinctively. Turning his head, he immediately deduced that this low, coarse voice was not the kidnapper's real voice: it had been altered by a machine.

"Especially when the opponent is the Solaris Emperor. Then we would need to be twice as careful."

Avery remained silent, noting that the kidnapper already knew his name. It wasn't unexpected, especially if they already knew what he looked like. They would only have to do a little research to find out his identity. At the same time, the kidnapper said that he was up against the Solaris Emperor. Avery was ninety percent sure that the attack was from the cyborg organisation.

Of course, the Emperor had many enemies. There was a good chance his guess was wrong, but he instinctively sensed he was right.

"What do you want me to do?" he asked.

"Ah, you don't have to do anything. Just being our hostage is enough."

"Really?" Avery replied dismissively. "Obviously you haven't been up against the Solaris Emperor for very long, or else you would know that that person has never cared about anybody else. Looks like instead of using me as a hostage and negotiating with that person, it would be better to talk to me directly."

His captor chuckled. "Ha! You've already been captured. What else is there to talk about?"

"Dark Sun was my creation," Avery replied calmly.

After these words there was a long silence from the other side, then explosive laughter that seemed to echo forever.

"That is indeed something to talk about. Help me create another Dark Sun; I can give you anything the Solaris Emperor can."

"Instead of building a second Dark Sun, I think it might be better for me to overhaul your robots," Avery responded. "Dark Sun is, without a doubt, a perfect creation, but the money and time spent making him was exorbitant. Money shouldn't be a problem, but you, the Solaris Emperor's enemy... do you have the time required for me to create another Dark Sun?"

"How long would it take?" the other asked, seemingly out of curiosity.

"The last time took eight years. This time I would need at least five, and there is no guarantee of success."

"Hmph! If you can't build another Dark Sun then why do I need you? Robots, I already have."

Avery knew exactly how to deal with this type of merchant. They only cared about fast and easy profits, so they would definitely be hooked if he made a tempting enough proposal.

"Give me two of your cyborgs and half a month. After my alterations they will, by working together, be able to defeat Dark Sun."

Silence again, but Avery wasn't worried. Even though he couldn't make a second Dark Sun, if two robots could defeat Dark Sun together there would be no need.

"How do I know you're not lying?" the man finally asked.

"Why would I?" Avery laughed. "Working under the Solaris Emperor or working under you; what's the difference?" he said helplessly. "Oh, right. My condition is an unlimited budget for experiments and a completely stocked laboratory."

The man laughed. "You're a realistic man, Mr. Avery. I will give you two weeks. After that, I will see the two robots capable of beating Dark Sun."

"No problem," Avery agreed, but in that instant what filled his mind was a smiling face calling him Papa Avery.

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Devon walked back into his office. As usual, Kyle was sitting off to the side, using his computer to issue the commands necessary to administrate the operations of this enormous organisation.

"Where is Avery?"

Kyle raised his head and gave the answer he had prepared. "Yes. Mr. Avery is being held at the Lunar Group's underground laboratory. It's in the suburbs, not far from here. Although we can definitely recover him, we cannot guarantee Mr. Avery's safety."

Devon Solaris frowned. "Has the Lunar Group made any demands?" he asked.

"No, sir."

Devon sat beside the desk and remained silent for a long time, drumming a slow rhythm on the tabletop.

"Are there any of my spies in that lab?"

"No. Everyone in that laboratory is a genuine expert."

"Tell me the best way to resolve this situation," Devon demanded darkly.

Kyle glanced strangely at Devon. Normally the Solaris Emperor didn't need any advice, but this time he demanded it bluntly. Regardless, Kyle obediently relayed the information.

"We will advance with the intent of rescuing the hostage. If the rescue attempt is unsuccessful the new goal will be to kill the hostage. Regarding Master Daren's maintenance..."

Devon glanced at Kyle frostily, and the latter realised he had made a mistake the moment the words left his mouth. Although he instantly broke out in a cold sweat, he continued without any change in expression.

“Any problems Master Daren will have in the future will be taken care of by a medical team consisting of newly-hired professionals. There shouldn’t be any problems with maintenance and first aid as long as they do not involve any of his enhancements.”

Kyle finished talking, but Devon did not respond. The former could only continue his work on the computer. In the short time he had been talking with the Solaris Emperor the mail requiring his reply had increased ten fold.

After a few minutes of contemplation, Devon could not deny that Kyle’s proposal was the most logical for this situation. Even he had wanted to try a rescue... Having the attempt succeed would be the best outcome, of course, but if a rescue were impossible they had to kill Avery.

After all, Avery knew too many secrets about Daren. At the same time, it would be a serious problem for the Solaris Federation if his skills were to fall into someone else’s hands.

But he couldn’t do it! Devon sighed.

“Dar really does like Avery. If Avery died he would be devastated,” he said.

Kyle, still working, replied reflexively. "After a while he will forget."

But Devon frowned. "It doesn't matter if he forgets or not, Bill, I already said that I would never make him sad."

"Of course." Kyle dutifully stopped working, and waited calmly for the Emperor's orders.

"Make Avery's rescue your primary goal. No matter what the cost, you must rescue that man."

"Yes, sir. Please set the limit on the highest acceptable cost."

"Do not place Daren or me in danger," Devon stated, then frowned. After thinking a moment, he added, "Also, do not compromise your own safety."

"Understood." Kyle nodded.

Devon's tone suddenly sharpened. "And send the best and most highly trained teams to guard my home. If Daren leaves the house you stick to him like glue. If the teams allow Daren to be hurt even slightly, they will pay with their lives."

"Yes sir."

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Ezart strolled lazily towards Daren's front door and pressed the doorbell. Naturally, the person who came out wasn't Avery, but a nameless bodyguard. Taking in Ezart's appearance, his expression immediately became wary and his tone unfriendly.

"What do you want?"

"I'm bringing Daren his homework," Ezart replied testily.

"Ezart! Is that Ezart?"

From behind the man came the sound of hurried footsteps, then Daren's calls. The guard was pushed aside. Even though he was determined to remain between the two, Dark Sun's strength was no laughing matter. Daren shoved him aside easily. Not being able to do anything else, he could only say, "Y-Young Master, please, we haven't inspected this person yet."

"You! Go away!" Daren shouted at the man resolutely.

Huh. Since when did he become so rude? Ezart raised his eyebrows, but didn't say a word.

However, the guard stood his ground, determined to do his duty. He turned toward Ezart and spoke with the frankness of a soldier giving orders.

"If you are in possession of any weapons hand them over now."

Ezart shrugged dismissively and took off his boxing gloves, throwing them to the guard along with his backpack.

"Is it alright now?"

The man examined the bag, but didn't find anything dangerous. He then scanned Ezart from top to bottom, but the boy's clothes were too simple: just a t-shirt and jeans. He might have been able to hide a small knife close to his body, but it would be impossible to conceal a gun. To the guard team members, in concealed posts around the mansion, a dagger was in no way a threat to the Young Master's safety. As a result, the man returned the bag to Ezart and allowed him to enter. Of course, he didn't fail to stick close to the two boys.

"Hmph!" Daren, looking none too happy, dragged Ezart towards the living room.

"After several days of not seeing you at school, your temper sure has grown." Ezart measured him up with a strange look in his eyes, as if he didn't recognise the person in front of him. "Have you decided to stop being your brother's good little boy?"

Daren's face stiffened. "I don't care about gege. He doesn't come home, and he won't let me rescue Papa," he answered stubbornly.

So the kid has some fight in him after all... Ezart scratched his face. Wasn't he a goody two shoes before?

They had only walked through the entrance and down a short corridor, but they had already passed a dozen guards, all armed to the teeth. Each one was obviously a specially trained bodyguard, a soldier capable of precise and deadly movements, and each one was standing still with vigilant expressions. It transformed the perfectly normal house into a battlefield.

Ezart, more and more confused, finally gave Daren a shove. "Hey! Are you rehearsing a military parade?"

He hadn't even finished his sentence before the bodyguards moved as one well-oiled machine and aimed their guns at him, provoked by his push. But the boy showed he was worthy of the name Plague God at Yelan Academy. Ezart, unarmed and with a dozen loaded guns pointed at him, showed no sign of panic. With his hands still crossed over his chest, the only clue he was aware of the guns aimed at his vitals was his raised eyebrows.

"Put down your guns! No one is allowed to hurt Ezart!"

Ezart hadn't reacted, but Daren yelled at the surrounding guards like an angry cat with its fur standing on end. But the guards didn't move until the guard who let Ezart in gave the signal. Then, moving in sync, they all put down their guns and returned to their original positions.

Furious, Daren dragged Ezart to the living room at a run, without a glance at the guards.

Once in the living room, Ezart sprawled on the sofa without a hint of

courtesy.

"What's going on in your house?" he asked idly.

"Gege said these people are here to protect me," Daren explained gloomily, sitting down beside Ezart.

"Protect? You?" Hearing this, Ezart threw back his head and roared with laughter. After a moment he managed to choke out a response. "Depend on those guys with the guns? They'd better not come running to you, begging you to protect them when the time comes!"

Daren tilted his head and imagined those alert, gun-toting soldiers crying for help. His anger disappeared immediately and he couldn't hold back a giggle, glancing at the soldier standing by the living room door. There was no way he hadn't heard Ezart comment, but his stoic face showed no emotion, and his back was still ramrod straight. Seeing this only made Daren giggle louder.

"Here! Your homework." Ezart pulled a couple of wrinkled and bent notebooks from his bag.

Daren hastily accepted the work. Even though homework was normally pretty boring, at least it was better than staying at home and doing nothing. He opened his notebook, only to find a piece of paper wedged between the pages. On the paper were a few lines of writing. No matter how he looked at it, the handwriting was too neat to be Ezart's.

However, reading between the lines, Daren quickly discovered that this

was Elian's doing. After a few lines of niceties, he got straight to the point. The principal had already given Dark Sun his first assignment. Furthermore, this mission was time sensitive. Elian was powerless to do anything but notify Daren to find out if he would accept or decline the request.

Daren sat thinking for a while. Although he was originally coerced into joining the Elite Combat Section by the principal, he really wanted to take the assignment, as it had already been a week since his brother had forbidden him from leaving the house. Spending every day cooped up with these emotionless soldiers was agonising. If he could just leave the house once, then nothing else would matter.

But his big brother definitely wouldn't allow it.

"Why the long face?" Ezart pinched Daren's cheeks and pulled.

"Gege won't let me rescue Papa Avery, or go outside." Daren pulled his cheeks away from Ezart's fingers and rubbed his face, grimacing in pain.

Ezart pulled his hand through his messy hair and shrugged. "It's useless. Who told your Papa to get kidnapped? It's been six, seven days already and still no news."

Daren shook his head in agreement, certain he was right. "There must have been news, it's just that Gege isn't telling me!" he said.

Ezart shrugged again.

Daren looked at the guards, rigidly standing to attention at their posts. He couldn't mention anything about the principal's missions in front of these people. Otherwise, if his brother knew that the principal had ordered Sin and Elan to gang up on him, and forced him to accept five missions, who knew what the Solaris Emperor would do to Yelan Academy...

"Let's go down to the basement. There are toys there we can play with."

"Toys?" Ezart didn't bother to hide his disgust. "Having Xiao Ai isn't enough for you? You're not a kid anymore, but you're still playing with toys..."

That said, he suddenly paused. Wait a second! According to his previous inference, this guy's mental age was probably around ten years old?!

Daren shook his head vigorously. "That's not it! They're different from Xiao Ai," he explained. "They're things like guns, grenades, battle simulator devices and various other tools, like night goggles and universal keys."

"... How are those toys."

"Let's just go, Ezart." Daren stood up, trying to forcefully pull Ezart up, too. But seeing the other boy, with his uninterested manner, he could only hint at his plan. "Let's go talk about El-gege; I miss him."

"Oh," Ezart replied, and leisurely stood up. Just as Daren was about to

explain that the armchair was the 'elevator' to the basement, a guard who was standing at the door spoke aloud, stopping them.

"Please wait a minute, Young Master. For your safety, I'll have to forbid you from taking others to the basement, filled with weapons."

"It's just Ezart. It's fine!" Daren insisted. "If you don't believe me you can ask Gege. Gege will surely let me take Ezart down."

The bodyguard frowned when he heard that, and whipped out his phone at once to consult with his higher-ups.

He briefly outlined the situation to his boss, then handed the phone over to Daren. The boy took the phone, filled with unease, afraid that his brother would not allow him to take Ezart to the basement.

"Dar." Devon's voice, sounding slightly tired, came from the phone. "I'll let you bring Ezart, but you'll have to promise me something. You have to promise that you absolutely will not allow yourself to be harmed in any way."

"Oh. Okay," Daren nodded. "Don't worry, Gege. Ezart can't beat me," he added reassuringly.

Ezart, who heard that, petulantly rolled his eyes at Daren. Twice.

"That's good. If you want, you can also let him stay over," Devon generously offered from the other end of the line, thinking if Ezart slept over and kept him company at home, then Daren wouldn't think about

secretly going to rescue Theodore.

Having received Gege's consent, Daren passed the phone back to the guard, only to see him repeatedly replying, "Yes, yes," into the phone.

Daren tugged Ezart and explained how to use the elevator. This time, the guard made no attempt to hold them back.

Once they were at the basement laboratory, Ezart wasted no time in asking, "Hey! Are you going to accept the mission from the principal or not? El, that guy, wants me to give him an answer tomorrow. If you're not going to take it, the principal's going to ask him and Sin to do it."

Daren nodded. "I want to accept, but Gege won't let me to go outside," he said.

Ezart scratched his head.

"Your house looks just like a military camp! If you sneak out, your brother will definitely know. I think you'd better not accept it. Your brother's wrath is not an ordinary kind of inconvenience, you know..."

"But I really want to go outside..." Daren's voice got softer and softer, his face full of disappointment.

Ezart rolled his eyes. "You just want to go rescue your dad, right?" he snapped.

Hearing that, Daren was silent for a moment, before he obediently admitting it by nodding.

"Ha! Even I could easily guess that; surely your brother would realise it, too, with how well he knows your personality. I'm thinking the main purpose for those people he assigned upstairs is probably to keep an eye on you. Otherwise you would definitely sneak off."

Shocked, it was then that Daren realised the truth. "Ah! So it was like that. Gege is so crafty!" he exclaimed.

"That's why you'd better abandon your thoughts of sneaking off, and just obediently wait for your brother to rescue your dad," Ezart said casually, as he languidly strolled about in the room, browsing through the various types of firearms in the display cabinet.

Nevertheless, Daren was still very worried. "But Papa Avery isn't Brother's father, and Gege almost always points a gun at Papa and threatens to kill him," he replied. "I'm scared that Gege won't seriously try to rescue Papa."

"Uh... That's true, too. Your family's relationships are just too complicated." Ezart shrugged and pointed at the firearms in the cabinets. "Hey! Do these guns really work, or are they only for display?"

Nodding, Daren answered. "The guns here can all be fired, and the cartridges are right next to them."

At the mention of firing them, Ezart unceremoniously pulled open the

display cabinet and took out a heavy-duty firearm. Even though he seldom used a gun, with a few practises he roughly understood how to install the clip and load the bullets. Having loaded the bullets from the box next to it, he carried the gun to the shooting range in a grand manner, and took a shot without even putting on the headset designed to prevent hearing damage.

Ezart, who hadn't adjusted his stance, stumbled back a step from the force of the gun's recoil. And, of course, the bullet that was fired didn't even graze the edge of the target sheet. But he didn't mind. A laugh erupted from him and he cried, "Ha! Firing this gun is pretty refreshing!"

That said, he tossed the gun to Daren. "Let's see you fire a few rounds."

"Okay." Daren nodded.

Holding the gun correctly in the standard grip, he walked to the firing station. Readied, he lifted the gun and fired without hesitation. His actions were so natural, like he had been born with the ability. And a second after the gun fired a fist-sized hole appeared in the exact center of the target sheet.

At the sight of that, Ezart whistled. "This gun's firepower's not half bad."

"Yeah, but the number of bullets it carries is too few. I've always wanted to improve it, but I haven't found a way yet."

"Heh! Why don't you fire a few more rounds? You made it look so easy. I might possibly learn it after observing for a few times." Ezart raised his

eyebrows in an insufferably arrogant expression.

Daren smiled. "Alright," he replied.

Just like that, Daren and Ezart took turns firing a few rounds each. Naturally, Daren had a one hundred percent probability of hitting dead center, while Ezart's probability remained zero.

"Hehe. Ezart, you didn't even hit it once." Seeing that, Daren grinned.

Ezart fired again, but the target sheet remained spotless. Irritated, he threw the gun to Daren. "Like I care. Can't I just shoot for the hell of it?" he retorted.

"Sure." Catching the gun, Daren turned his attention back to the target sheet and began firing.

Although Daren's actions were as beautiful and accurate as before, Ezart had already become tired of watching. Looking around, a cup on the table caught his eye, containing a liquid that looked a lot like Coke. Seizing the cup, he drank it all down in one gulp.

"Ha! The flavor's not bad, just slightly bitter. Hey! What kind of drink is this?" he called out.

"Drink?"

Slightly surprised, Daren stopped firing and turned around. "There are

no beverages in my house, only plain water and the coffee Gege and Papa Avery drink," he explained. "Do you want some water or coffee, Ezart?"

"Then what's this? Coffee? It doesn't taste like it." Raising the cup, Ezart frowned and inspected it. "Such a strange cup; it even has measuring marks," he criticised.

Daren stared at the cup woodenly. "You're right, the cup really is strange. It looks like one of Papa Avery's measuring cups for his experiments..." he said.

Having said that, the two of them suddenly quieted down and fixed their eyes on the cup together. They came to the same conclusion at the same time. Ah! This cup does not only look like a measuring cup, it is a measuring cup... Wait, a measuring cup?!

They looked at the measuring cup dully, which only had a few drops of the unknown brown liquid pooled in the bottom, while the rest... had all been drunk by Ezart!

"Ezart!" Terrified, Daren shrieked, "Quick, quick! Throw it up!"

"It's already been a while since I drank it. What's left to vomit?" Ezart roared in disbelief. "Why is a measuring cup your dad uses for experiments here with you? And what the hell was even in this cup?"

"I have no idea!"

Daren panicked. He had no clue as to what he should do. Normally, Papa Avery's experiments were totally unassociated with words like 'safety'. Daren's brain unconsciously recalled the tragic appearance of the corpses that were unable to reincarnate in the lab. Would Ezart end up like that, too?

I don't want that!

As his thoughts whirled, Daren grew more and more distressed. Ultimately, Daren could only harden his heart and clench his right fist, before he punched Ezart straight in the stomach.

A unexpected punch right to his gut—and a pretty heavy punch at that, due to Dar's anxiety—made Ezart drop to the ground, throwing up endlessly.

"Vo-vomiting it out is good."

Daren heaved a sigh of relief at the sight. This way, Ezart probably wouldn't become like those corpses in the lab.

As Ezart puked, he still occasionally lifted his head and glared at Daren, threatening. "Urgh, you damn brat, are you tired of living?... Urgh! Something will be wrong with the world if I don't kill you later!"

Even though he was scolded, Daren grinned. The fact that Ezart still had the strength to scold him meant that he should be fine now. Daren lightly patted Ezart's back, trying to ease his breathing, which, of course, earned him a few eye rolls from the other, free of charge.

"I'll go bring you some water to gargle."

Daren, under Ezart's baleful glare, tactfully withdrew his hand and walked to the water cooler in the corner of the room. While filling a cup, he suddenly heard some weird moaning and groaning sounds. Daren immediately stopped what he was doing and whipped around to see that Ezart was still in the same half kneeling position, but had stopped throwing up. Even though the retching had stopped, his shoulders were heaving and, looking closely, Daren could even see that Ezart's body was trembling slightly.

Daren shouted in a strangled voice. "Ezart?"

"Uhh..." However, Ezart had not even raised his head; it was like a reflexive response from hearing one's name. After his reply came a series of muffled groans.

Daren blankly held on to the cup, unsure if he should continue getting water or go back to check on Ezart. While he was frozen with indecision, the situation suddenly changed. Ezart abruptly raised his head and howled at the ceiling. There was madness written on his face. His eyes rolled back, showing the whites. His eyes gazed at nothing, like he was only semi-conscious.

"Ezart?!"

Frozen, it wasn't until the cup fell from his hand and smashed to pieces on the floor that Daren suddenly came back to his senses. By then, Ezart was clutching his head and rolling around on the floor in agony. Daren

wasn't sure if he was imagining it, but he saw Ezart's muscles writhing and distorting...

As moments passed the squirming and distortion of Ezart's muscles became worse, his roar grew increasingly intense, and there were no words that could describe the pain on his face. He kept thrashing around on the floor. In the end, Ezart was so deformed his entire being looked just like a lump of dough being kneaded.

"Ezart... Ezart!" Daren sobbed.

Daren had rushed to Ezart's side by then, but he had no idea what to do. Hugging Ezart desperately, he could only think of trying to apply pressure to the places that were out of shape, hoping fervently that it would lessen Ezart's pain.

After a long time—Daren didn't know how long—had passed, Ezart finally quieted down. His muscles had stopped squirming abnormally, and what had once been deformed had returned to normal. However, he looked far from fine, with his flushed red skin and the fact that no matter how Daren called out to him, there was no reaction. He was unconscious.

"Ezart. Ezart?"

Daren carefully inspected Ezart. His friend's chest was heaving; he didn't need to check there to know he was still breathing. The main concern was that he wouldn't wake up, no matter how loud Daren called him.

By then, a guard had come down. "Young master, dinner has been prepared," he dutifully reminded him.

Hearing his voice, Daren blankly lifted his head and looked at the soldier, tears streaming down his face.

"I can't seem to wake Ezart up. What should I do?" he asked, dazed.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c04 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 5

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"Dar..."

When Devon rushed back home, he only had eyes for his beloved little brother, who was leaning against the side of the bed. On the bed lay Ezart, with his eyes firmly closed and his skin abnormally flushed.

As he took another step forward, Daren became aware of his presence. He picked himself up and turned his head towards Devon, rubbing his eyes tiredly.

"Gege," he greeted, melancholic.

Devon crossed the room to him and tenderly patted his didi's head.  
"How is Ezart?"

"The doctor said that Ezart's state seems to be similar to cases of stimulant overdose." Daren turned his head back to the unconscious Ezart. "The doctor also said that because he doesn't know what Ezart has taken he doesn't dare recklessly prescribe any medicine for him. He fears that it could produce more problems. We can only wait for the test results of the substance inside that cup before proceeding with his treatment. For now, we can only let Ezart continue sleeping."

"Then don't worry too much, Dar. According to Gege's experiences, as long as they don't die immediately, people will usually survive." Devon glanced at the boy on the bed. "Especially this guy," he murmured. "His body is so tough. No matter how you look at it, he's like a cockroach that can't be killed."

"Really?" Daren asked as he raised his head, face filled with hope.

"Of course!" After Devon earnestly nodded his head to his little brother, he immediately urged Daren, "You should hurry up and sleep, too. Look at your eyes; they're so red. Tomorrow, I'll get the other three to keep you company, okay?"

"They can?" Daren asked, surprised.

"Of course they can," Devon smiled as he conceded. "Otherwise you'd be bored staying at home by yourself, right?"

"Yeah, yeah!" Daren nodded fervently. "Gege isn't home for most of the time, Papa Avery isn't here..." he said quietly. "Ah! Papa Avery! How is Papa right now? Gege, have you rescued him yet?"

"No, I haven't," Devon replied, a bit embarrassed.

"Ah...Is that so? Then, Gege, you need to keep on doing your best."

Daren lowered his head. He stretched out his hand and straightened Ezart's blanket, and then walked past his brother with an extremely disheartened expression.

Devon reached out his hand, hoping to pat his little brother's shoulder. But whether it was a coincidence or on purpose, Daren leaned to the side, evading his hand and walking past.

D-Dar.. Devon stood there, frozen, with his hand still in the air. In his whole life he had never felt a sense of defeat from anyone. However, at this moment, his little brother's actions of disappointment had dealt him such a strong blow that he simply stood there, rooted to the spot.

However, as Daren reached the door, he suddenly paused.

"Dar, what's wrong?" asked Devon, thinking it was strange.

"Gunshots..."

Daren had only begun his sentence when the door to the study room suddenly crashed open. In the same instant, Daren's nails subtly, silently lengthened. The moment the intruder stepped through the open door, Daren's hand stabbed towards their neck at lightning speed. As his nails grazed the outermost edge of the person's skin he noticed the face and froze. He didn't pierce the skin, but he didn't move his nails away, either.

The intruder instinctively wanted to speak, but the moment he opened his mouth his neck muscles moved. This made him immediately aware of the touch of metal at his throat. From the stinging pain in his neck, he didn't doubt for a second that this thing could slit his throat and instantly take his life.

His eyes widened, looking at the fragile boy in front of his eyes. The boy's expression revealed a sense of calm that not even a well-trained soldier from the Delta Forces had. Indeed, he could even say that this was the face of a cold-blooded killer.

"It's a bodyguard..." Daren muttered. Even though he was a bit reluctant, he moved his hand away.

"What is happening?" reproached Devon, as he finally comprehended the situation before him. He was enraged, seeing that his little brother had almost killed someone again.

Hearing Devon question him in such a reprimanding tone, the guard instantly stood up straighter to report. "Reporting: the enemy has invaded. Solaris Emperor, please take cover in the hidden room."

Hearing his announcement, Devon was silent for a moment. After he nodded his head at the bodyguard, he turned toward his younger brother.

"Dar, carry Ezart and follow me."

Instinctively, Daren wanted to argue with his brother and say that he wanted to go and help as well, but after he heard Ezart's name, he turned his head to look at the unconscious boy lying on the bed. After quietly picking him up, he stood beside his brother.

Devon glanced at Daren sideways and sighed with relief in his heart. Lucky that Ezart is out for the count, otherwise I really wouldn't have any

excuse to persuade Dar not to participate in this battle.

However, the enemy had actually found their way to this location, proving that the information he had gathered in the past few days was real.

Avery... Have you betrayed us? If Dar were to know of this, he would be brokenhearted, right?

Thinking up to this point, Devon's heart felt a wave of discomfort. But I should stop worrying about this right now. The most important thing at this moment is to withdraw to the secret room before Dar is forced to hurt someone.

He moved towards one side of the room and lifted a small painting off the wall. Behind the painting was a numeric keypad. After he swiftly pressed the twelve numbered key-code, the wall suddenly transformed into a single leaf door that opened to a smaller pathway, narrower than the entrance. From the side, it could be seen that the door was three hands thick.

"Dar, come over here."

Daren obediently followed his brother's words and passed through the passage entrance, holding Ezart. This wasn't as simple as it sounded. Ezart had an extremely muscular and brawny kind of build and the entrance was much narrower than normal doorways. If worse came to worst, he would have really had to shove and squeeze the boy in his arms through the entrance somehow.

After Daren walked a ways down the hidden corridor he came to a staircase sloping downwards. He descended into the stairwell, and, after walking for a few minutes, he finally made it to the bottom of the flight of stairs.

At the bottom he found himself walking into a room filled with high tech equipment. One entire wall of the room was dedicated to an enormous screen and in front of this screen was a machine panel filled with buttons. The only thing inside the room that wasn't a machine was the single bed in the corner. There was also another door at the other end of the room that was probably an exit to outside the building.

He placed Ezart on the single bed and turned his head to see that his brother and that bodyguard had already entered behind him. Devon had even begun operating the machine panel in front of the screen. Right after he pressed a few buttons, the entrance they came through closed without a sound.

Seeing the door closed, Daren then finally, desperately said, "Gege, I can..."

"You can't! You're not allowed!" Devon said without turning his head.

Hearing his brother's words, Daren could only respond with 'okay', not daring to ask anymore.

Devon turned on the screen, immediately dividing it into eight frames showing the situation in every corner of the house. They could see the battle taking place in the frame showing the front corridor. On the screen, the bodyguards were equipped with many lightweight and heavyweight

weapons, and were expertly aligned in their formations. They were as strong and as sturdy as a brick wall, blocking their invaders. In addition, the rounds of bullets fired were intensely concentrated, making it enough to annihilate the majority of any group of intruders, even if they had been a team from Delta Force.

However, the opponent consisted of merely two people, and, looking at them, it seemed like they weren't hurt at all.

The two figure's movements were so fast they seemed inhuman. More than that, their movements weren't limited to the ground; their feet ran over not only the two walls either side of them, but had also shifted to the ceiling several times, as if gravity had no effect on them. They moved continuously, running in all directions: up, down, left, right.

Even the highly trained bodyguards murmured, "These people are not human at all..."

Devon furrowed his brow. Although he wasn't someone who really bothered with the notions of combative fighting, he could still see that these two's movements were extremely familiar.

Daren stared at the screen. The more he looked at them, the stranger he felt. Finally, he couldn't help blurting out, "Their movements are really similar to mine."

Devon's face tensed up, and the bodyguard beside him subtly revealed a look of hesitation, as if he couldn't believe the words he had heard. Although he had known of the young master's exceptional skill, he never thought that it would be to this inhuman degree.

"Why are their movements so similar to mine? They weren't like this before," said Daren questioningly, as he kept his eyes fixed on the screen, allowing the microchip in his brain to analyse and determine the percentage of their similarities.

"Dar!" Devon calmly called out, trying to get his brother's attention. Once Daren heard his gege's call, he stopped his analysis and turned his head to face him. As for this older brother, he then lied to his little brother without batting an eye. "Just now, I think I heard Ezart groaning and asking for water. I think you need to go over and pour some for him."

"Really?"

Although Daren hadn't heard anything, he still turned around and walked over to the bed worriedly. He closely examined Ezart's condition, but it was evident that he still remained in a deep sleep; even his position on the bed was the same and hadn't changed at all.

While Daren did this, Devon immediately shifted his hand and turned off the screen. Then, he pretended to be annoyed. "Oh no! Something is wrong with the screen."

Daren leaned his head over to take a closer look at Ezart. He had just determined that Ezart hadn't moved an inch when he heard his brother's words. He couldn't help but turn to look at the screen. It had really turned off, leaving only a black screen.

"Tell the others outside to inform me immediately if there is any change in the situation," Devon ordered the bodyguard standing to the side.

"Yes, Sir," the guard replied, grabbing the radio at once and notifying his comrades outside.

Devon walked towards the bed and patted his brother's head. He tried to comfort him. "Don't worry, Dar. This room is very sturdy and solid. Even if those two have extraordinary capabilities and defeat all the bodyguards, it is impossible for them to get in here."

Especially since Avery doesn't know this room's password.

"Okay," Daren nodded.

"Report: there is a change in circumstances," the bodyguard suddenly announced.

Devon frowned. "Say it!" he ordered sharply.

"The enemy cannot break through our formation and have started to withdraw."

Devon's eyes sparkled in delight. The other side is already retreating? This is great news! At least we have endured through one possible crisis without Dar going out to fight.

"For tonight, strengthen the amount of forces in the night watch, and escort us back to the headquarters tomorrow morning," he ordered the bodyguard.

“Understood, Sir.”

Devon reached out a hand and patted his brother’s head indulgently. “Dar, Gege will definitely protect you,” he said, with a determination that bordered on the sinister.

Hearing it like that, Daren could only nod his head obediently.

Brother... But I want to protect you, too.

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The body was lying on the bed in the darkened room, sound asleep without even twitching. A moment later, a figure slipped silently into the room. He stood beside the bed for a long time, but the sleeper remained unconscious.

“Ezart, when will you finally wake up...?” he asked softly.

The sleeping Ezart didn’t answer. The other figure could only turn and edge away without a word, before carrying on with what he had come to do in the first place.

He walked over to a small picture hanging on the wall and lifted the frame away. Behind it was a numbered keypad. He muttered under his breath as he pressed a series of buttons. “The twelve numbers Gege pressed earlier were 5874...”

When the numbers were entered, the door opened once again. Behind it was the hallway and the staircase spiraling downwards. The figure descended the stairs without hesitation and eventually arrived at the bottom, where the underground complex was located, lights blazing. Stepping into the room, the figure was revealed. Silver-white hair, pitch-black pupils, a childishly innocent demeanor: it was Daren Solaris.

He looked about the room warily. "If Gege knew I'd snuck in here, he'd probably blow his top," he mumbled guiltily.

Thinking of this, he couldn't help but wonder if it was really necessary to come here, to defy his brother's wish for him to live life as a normal boy. But he wasn't a normal boy; he would protect his brother! He had sworn this long ago.

As such, Daren steeled himself as he walked into the middle of the room. To the side was an enormous screen.

Earlier, Gege said the screen was broken... Daren smiled bitterly. Did his brother really expect him to believe that?

Even if Daren might have been fooled, Dark Sun was not one to have the wool pulled over his eyes so easily. As a first-class bodyguard, how could he not have excellent judgment? Dark Sun had discerned the lie almost as soon as the words had left Devon's lips.

If his brother had lied about the screen malfunctioning, then he must have wanted to stop Daren seeing something. Every time Devon kept him in the dark it was always about fighting, cyborgs, or something that

would upset him. Right now, though, the only things that would make Daren sad, and involved cyborgs and fighting, were related to Devon and Papa Avery.

If so, how could he not find out?

Even if it upset him, or made him defy Gege's orders and fight, if it was related to his brother's safety then it couldn't be ignored. Daren's only desire was to protect Gege, and Dark Sun was the perfect bodyguard.

Daren glanced down at the dashboard, covered with switches and buttons. He took a few minutes to familiarise himself with the controls, then pulled up the data on the cyborgs' earlier attack. Daren watched with unblinking eyes as the screen began to play the battle recording.

Although intense, the battle only lasted about half an hour, and the clip ended quickly. After watching the two altered humans in combat, Daren closed his eyes and focused on using the chip in his brain to analyse the problem.

The microchip finished its analysis after a minute.

There was ninety percent similarity between the two attacker's actions and Dark Sun's basic movements. Since the only creator of Dark Sun still alive was Theodore Avery, there was a ninety-nine percent chance that Avery had enhanced the cyborgs.

Ninety-nine percent... Daren opened his eyes. A ninety-nine percent chance calculated by the chip was essentially the same as one hundred percent certainty. Because there were always outliers, the chip almost never reached a conclusion of one hundred percent.

"So that's how it is. Did Papa Avery join the enemy?"

Daren's head drooped, but not because of disappointment or sadness, as Devon might have feared. Daren was not really surprised by Avery's betrayal.

After all, he had been with Avery for eight years. Even though theirs wasn't exactly a normal kind of cohabitation, it was more than enough for him to understand the doctor's nature. Avery was never one to sacrifice himself for others, or else he would have tried to rescue Daren eight years ago, instead of subjecting him to life-threatening operations time after time. Although Avery pitied him, consoled him, despaired for him, and was reluctant to let him go, he had never once tried to save him.

Yet he still cared for Papa Avery because he had never once begrudged him a smile. If not for that smile, Daren might never have seen his brother, might have... from the beginning...

I still love you, Papa Avery, but you betrayed Gege, and he will never forgive you.

"If, for my sake, Gege really tried to rescue you before, he will doubtless change his orders to have you killed now."

Daren closed his eyes in despair. If the man had really jumped ship to the other side, then, to protect his brother, Daren would be forced to kill Avery.

Maybe... Papa was only pretending to betray us and the two cyborgs weren't really that dangerous?

Daren couldn't help but think that. Full of hope, he played the battle over again, using his microchip to take another look, to see if the two altered people made any mistakes in their movements.

"That..."

Halfway through the clip Daren suddenly noticed something strange in the way one of the cyborgs moved. His actions seemed slightly restricted and he was grazed by several bullets he should have been able to avoid.

For an ordinary person that may have been understandable, but for a cyborg to make mistakes like that meant that he was broken... or he was obeying another order, one that took precedence over the one to fight, and he had erred because of that.

Daren looked at the screen and frowned. Those footsteps seemed a little strange. Da, da-da...

... It was Morse code!

He hastily rewound the clip to the start and stayed glued to the screen, refusing to miss even one step as he carefully decoded the message.

"I am... Avery... in three days...at two o'clock... in the morning..."

Then came an address. He continued to translate the code, as, searching inside his head, he identified the location as fairly far from home.

"...help me."

After that, the cyborgs started to cover each other as they began to retreat, and their footsteps no longer spelt out any words.

"Papa Avery..."

Daren lowered his head, deep in thought. What should he do? Should he tell Devon? But, if it was a trap... Ah! If even I think it's a trap, Gege will definitely think so, too. Would Gege go and rescue Papa Avery?

Daren frowned. The part of his mind that belonged to Dark Sun was blaring danger signals, telling him, "It's a trap, it's a trap". But his emotional side ignored the warning, because if he heeded it he might never see Papa again. He would lose one of the people he loved.

Eventually, Daren lifted his head. "I still love Papa. I'm going to rescue him!" he declared.

But how could he possibly do it? If he waited until tomorrow, then the bodyguards would escort him and his brother to headquarters. Although defeating the bodyguards wouldn't be a problem, as long as he was with Devon he could never disobey his order not to fight. His brother would also never let him leave to rescue Avery.

Once they were at headquarters, there would most likely be even more people guarding Daren. It was also possible that Devon would stay by his side, making it even more difficult to escape.

The only way to save Papa Avery would be... He turned to glance at the secret room's other exit. That would be the only way, and he would have to leave right now. If he waited until tomorrow it would be too late.

Thinking this, he made up his mind to leave. Tonight. But, considering how the enemy had stolen his Reaper's Scythe and how three of the nails on his left hand were broken, he had lost his most powerful weapon and his second best was half destroyed. His fighting ability would be severely affected.

"I can make up for it with firearms, then."

Scowling with determination, Daren went up the staircase again and returned to the guest room above. He glanced once again at Ezart's prone form. Now he was even more intent on saving Avery. After all, Ezart had become like that after he drinking Avery's potion, so Avery must know how to wake him up!

He walked along the corridor, but the guards lining the walls did nothing to stop him, nor did they even seem suspicious. In this day and age, a restless young man in the middle of the night was nothing to be surprised about.

If Devon or Avery were there, they would have known that something was wrong. Dar was a good boy that went to bed at ten o'clock sharp every night. Walking the halls so late at night was extremely out of

character.

But Papa and his brother were not there, so Daren moved about without interruption, returning to the basement to grab his backpack and fill it with heavy firearms, lighter model handguns, timed bombs, grenades, and an assortment of dangerous equipment.

He then snuck back upstairs and headed towards the room where Ezart lay, intending to leave through the secret room exit.

This time, however, the bodyguards took an interest in Daren. Not sleeping in the middle of the night might be acceptable, but not sleeping and running around with a bag filled with firearms was definitely not.

"Young Master, may I ask what those guns are for?" one guard asked hesitantly.

"We're leaving here tomorrow so I'm packing my bags," Daren answered promptly, the picture of innocence.

Then does every young man's luggage consist of firearms? And he answered with such an innocent expression, too... Although the guard sighed with exasperation inside, he replied dutifully. "Master, we can carry it for you."

"No! They are precious to me." Daren Solaris didn't panic, but replied confidently. "I'm taking them with me tomorrow."

"Yes, Sir."

The bodyguard could only nod, but in his heart he was praying. If the master's marksmanship is as extraordinary as rumors say, then if he were forced to use them then the danger of the guns would be the least of our problems.

And so Daren, ignoring the presence of the guards, carried his bag full of weapons into the room, opened the hidden door, and made as if to step down the stairs. At the last second he stopped and glanced at Ezart's form still lying on the bed.

"Wait for me, Ezart. I will bring Papa Avery back to save you," he announced.

After that he descended into the passage without hesitation, not noticing how Ezart's right hand suddenly contracted into a fist, before it relaxed and laid flat upon the bed, returning to a semblance of deep sleep.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c05 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 6

Translator: LilsxD, Yihn

Proofreader: Arc, Catchkatch

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The moon hid behind drifting clouds. The quiet of the dark, sleeping city was broken only by the occasional phantom bark or whisper, and the noise of vehicles zooming by.

A garbage truck was parked in the narrow alley between two buildings. Papers littered the ground, blown about by the wind, and on both sides of the building were old, dilapidated iron doors that looked as if they had stood untouched for a long time.

In this seemingly impenetrable darkness, one of the metal doors silently opened. Amazingly, such an ancient, rusty door made not a sound as it swung ajar.

Anyone watching might fear one of the city's wandering spirits was opening it... However, the next second a person in red tights and a silver visor walked out, carrying a huge bag with slight bulges outlining the shape of firearms.

Although this person was obviously not a spectre, his movements were so nimble and silent that he moved like a ghost.

The man slowly closed the iron door. With a slight turn of his head to observe his surroundings, he began calculating.

From Theodore's morse code message, the time was set for three days from now. So, where should he go for now?

He would have to find a place where his brother wouldn't find him. He couldn't use Gege's credit card for anything like a hotel room, but sleeping in the park wouldn't work either, even if he didn't use the card. As long as it was in a public place, his brother would definitely find him immediately.

Despite that, he hadn't been to many places before, outside of home, the Solaris Headquarters, and the school. Since the first two were off the list, what was left was... the school, then?

"The school... Principal..." he mumbled. "The Principal's office!"

At the thought of the Principal's office, no longer undecided, he immediately started running. But this alley had only one exit and his only way out should have been to turn left.

However, he didn't go either left or right but—upwards!

He took two running steps forward, before he kicked off from the wall and landed, perching, on top of the second storey window. With a flip, he landed on the second storey window sill and, in a twisting motion, he swung down to hang from the overhang by his hands, before, with a kick to the wall, he propelled himself up to the third storey window. He used this complicated series of moves to climb higher and higher up the building.

He stopped at the fifth story, just below the top floor, and leapt onto the opposite building. Using a combination of jumping, running, climbing and crawling, he advanced forwards along the buildings' walls. As he ran, he avoided the top and bottom floors where he could, because he knew that surveillance cameras would be installed there, allowing Gege to track him easily. The cameras' blind spots were only between the top and bottom storeys, so as long as his shadow was not captured on film his brother would never be able to trace him.

Apart from these surveillance cameras, he had also left the mobile phone his brother had given him at home. Even though he had not checked the phone, he guessed that it would definitely have some sort of tracking device attached.

After travelling in the gravity-defying way for a short while, he could see the school's campus in the distance. He quickened his pace, and before long Dark Sun was already on a rooftop garden of a building next to the school. Then, after carefully scrutinising the surroundings, and locating the surveillance cameras, he easily avoided detection as he jumped down onto the darkened school grounds.

Because of the Principal's promise to remove the surveillance cameras on campus, Dark Sun crossed straight through the centre of the campus and headed directly for the Principal's office.

Arriving at the Principal's office—or, rather, the 'Principal's building'—he turned and rummaged in his backpack, pulling out a card. It was the card he'd received when he agreed to accept the Principal's missions, and doubled as Dark Sun's ECS identity card.

He fought the urge to laugh as he thought about how he was only one person but had two Yelan Academy student ID cards.

At a swipe of his card, the huge doors beeped and swung open and he entered the building. Amazingly, even though it was deep into the night, a couple of people were still there, patrolling or sitting in front of a computer monitoring missions. Neither of them paid any attention to the other, and neither of them turned to take a look even when the door opened.

It made him, who was originally tense at the sight of other people, relieved. Unobserved, he then went to one of the computers in the lounge with the intention of arbitrarily searching for information to kill some time until the Principal arrived.

Casually opening a web browser, he saw the daily news alerts. The top headline was The Stormy Battle Between the Solaris Group and the Lunar Group.

Daren couldn't help but click on the link to read. Once the page loaded, it showed both Devon Solaris and Yue Baylian's photograph. In Devon's photo, there was even a cigarette dangling from his hand and his head was tilted upwards slightly, with a lofty expression that made him look like he was looking down on the whole world. The image of Yue Baylian stood to attention, revealing a slightly thoughtful smile and there was even the word 'VS' in the middle of the photos.

"Gege..." Daren looked at the picture. His heart ached a little as he imagined his brother finding out he was gone. What would his reaction be?

... Ah!

At the thought that he would be unable to see his brother for several days, Daren felt a bit lonely. Without thinking, he automatically pressed the button to print. After printing out Devon's photo, he carefully looked at it for a moment before folding it a few times and putting it in the pocket close to his heart.

Wait for me, Gege! Once Dar has rescued Papa Avery, our home can go back to the way it was!

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"Don't, Gege! Dar doesn't want to go to school! I don't want to leave you!"

"Don't be afraid, Dar. Your big brother will protect you."

"Really?"

"Of course. If Gege lies to you, I'll eat a dozen bitter gourds."

"Promise?"

"Promise."

"Father! Where is Dar?"

"I was thinking of giving him to you as a present for your 25th birthday..."

"Congratulations for your success of having modified a teenager into the ultimate bodyguard—Dark Sun."

"Dar, you're still my brother and I swore to protect you. Always."

"Please let me protect you, too, Gege... It's not only Gege who wants to protect Dar; I want to protect Gege, too."

"Dar, why can't you be like a normal teenager?"

A head of blond hair rested on the black leather chair, making the bright gold colour look even more dazzling. Just like that, Devon slept while leaning back in his office chair, without even shutting down the computer. His brow was furrowed. He seemed to have something bothering him even as he slept. After a few quirks, his eyes suddenly opened, revealing the beautiful ruby-coloured irises.

Blinking twice, Devon was already wide awake. Massaging his face with one hand, he sighed softly.

"Dar..."

Glancing at the clock, he saw that the hands pointed at almost exactly

3 o'clock. Dar would be in bed asleep already. It was simply a nightmare of the past causing him to be flustered for no reason, but...

Should I check on Dar? he thought, hesitant.

However, thinking it over some more, he rejected the idea. Absolutely not! Dar wasn't a normal teenager. No matter how gentle his movements, the youth would surely wake up. Devon didn't want to disturb his brother's good night's sleep at three in the morning for no reason.

But why? Why is it that my heart feels so uneasy?

As Devon wavered back and forth he grew more and more worried. Finally, he couldn't take it anymore, and marched to his brother's room. He paced outside for a few minutes before pushing into the room.

The instant he entered, his gaze went straight to the bed, only to find no sign of Dar. Striding further into the room, he opened the door to check the empty bathroom, then he walked over to the bed. Standing in front of the neatly made bed, he reached out a hand, touching it for a moment. The blankets and sheets were neat and cold, which could only mean that the bed hadn't been slept in tonight... Dar hadn't even come back!

Devon's mind blanked for a minute, before finally remembering that the last time he had seen Dar the boy had still been in the guest room where Ezart was resting.

"Could he still be in Ezart's room?"

With that thought, Devon dashed out again. He didn't care even if he appeared out of sorts as he passed by a whole row of bodyguards on the way.

Rushing to the guest room, Devon abruptly pushed open the door.

"Dar?!" he shouted.

There was only one person quietly lying on the bed, but he was not the one Devon was looking for.

Where exactly has Dar gone?

Flustered, Devon yelled, "Captain of the Guards!"

The door swung open instantly, revealing the figure of the head bodyguard.

"Here," he answered.

The Bodyguard Captain's respectful and controlled actions made Devon notice his own loss of composure. He took a deep breath to settle his rampaging emotions, using the time to sort out his thoughts, thinking of all the things his little brother could be up to.

"Where is Dar?" he asked with a frown, after calming himself.

"Young Master hasn't left this room," the Captain reported.

But the man had a terrifying discovery—the room held no traces of the young master.

"Are you certain that Dar has been in this room all along, never leaving once?" Devon continued questioning.

"No, Young Master did go down to the basement once and brought a bag of firearms up. He said they were supplies he needed to keep with him for protection. Then he returned to the room and has not left it since."

Once the man had finished speaking Devon lost his cool once again. "Yet you didn't bother reporting that to me?" he roared furiously.

"That is correct," the Bodyguard Captain replied, bracing himself.

The Captain knew his outcome wouldn't be good. He had been too careless. But that was because he had treated the young master as his employer and not as a captive, so he had not thought that the boy would escape so stealthily. Also, who would have guessed that the young master from a rich family could carry such a heavy backpack—a bag that an average person would have struggled with—to run away from home?

Although he had just calmed his emotions, Devon was so agitated even his breathing was ragged. That made the Captain at his side stare in disbelief, eyes wide. Having followed the Solaris Emperor until now, he

had never seen his emotions get so out of control before.

Basically, the Solaris Emperor wouldn't have cared even if the criminals threatened him with the lives of thousands of employees, and would have still calmly ordered his dinner with a menu on his own... The Solaris Emperor was that much of a cold-blooded person.

Devon had probably noticed the surprise on the Bodyguard Captain's face. He walked to the wall, flicked up the small drawing on it, and pushed a series of buttons on the numberpad to open the secret door.

"Go down and see whether he's in there," he ordered.

"Got it." Receiving the command, the bodyguard immediately set off into the secret room.

The moment the bodyguard left, Devon's strong façade disappeared. He deflated like a balloon and slumped down to sit on the bed.

"Dar, do you want to save Avery that much? But he's a traitor!" he muttered.

All traitors had to be eliminated in order for everyone to understand that the consequence of betraying the Solaris Emperor was much more terrifying than being killed by the enemy. Besides the traitors' eradication, the Solaris Emperor would also vent his fury on their family and friends. Instead of betraying him, it would be better to heroically sacrifice their lives. After all, if they were to do that, then their families would at least receive an enormous sum of money in compensation,

allowing them to live a good life even without them.

This system had fortified the operations of the Solaris Federation. That was why the moment Avery chose to betray him Devon hadn't hesitated to order his death. It was just... that for a long time Avery had been a solitary man with no one important to him. Don't even talk about family; he hadn't even had a single friend. Naturally, his actions wouldn't have affected anyone else before. That may also have been one of the reasons why he'd dared to betray them.

Has Dar realised that I decided not to rescue Avery, and that's why he chose to save Avery himself?

"Idiot!" Devon couldn't help but furiously reprimand himself.

I have been too careless! Always thinking that Dar wouldn't go against my wishes, I didn't even tell the bodyguards to watch Dar closely.

At this moment, the bodyguard returned to the surface. "Report: the young master isn't in the hidden room."

Devon wasn't surprised. He had already guessed that this would be the answer.

"Continue to be on alert," he ordered listlessly.

"Yes, Sir."

Devon walked back to his study. The second he sat down, he immediately dialled his secretary's phone number, not caring that it was 3 o'clock in the morning.

If these were normal circumstances, Kyle would have picked up the phone before the second ring. However it was before dawn right now, so this time the phone rang for a while longer. Devon drummed his fingers on the black surface of the table lightly as he continued to wait on the line. His face held no expression.

The phone rang five times before it was picked up. A tired voice that evidently tried to remain professional answered the phone. "Good morning, Solaris Emperor. This is Kyle."

"Morning, Bill." Devon simply and quickly explained the situation. "Dar ran away. He took a huge bag of guns with him, so he's probably trying to save Avery."

The phone was silent for a while. Kyle had heard everything, so he wasn't waiting for a further explanation of the situation, but rather the Solaris Emperor's orders.

"He escaped through the hidden room. Dispatch the tracking squad and find him immediately."

"Yes, Sir."

Although Devon didn't issue any other commands, he also didn't press the end call button. He paused for a moment, still holding the phone.

"Should I cancel the order to eliminate Avery?" Kyle asked carefully.

Although it wasn't his place to ask questions, the fact that the Solaris Emperor had issued an order to kill the person that Young Master Daren ran away from home to save... No matter what, it just didn't seem right. On top of that, the Solaris Emperor's delay in ending the call may also have been for this reason.

The Solaris Emperor wants to pardon of the person Young Master Daren desires to save, but he isn't able to speak up and call off the elimination order of a known traitor.

That's why Kyle dared to ask this question: it was to give the Solaris Emperor a way out of his dilemma. But, contrary to his expectations, although the Solaris Emperor's face tensed up and he was silent for a while, in the end he still icily said, "No, kill him. I won't allow the existence of any traitors."

"Yes, Sir."

Afterwards, Devon pressed the end call button. On the surface he had kept his usual demeanor of not softening his heart under any circumstance. But this time his heart had really hesitated. It was because of his only weak point.

If Avery died Dar would be sad, right? But if I don't have Avery killed and if, by chance, we really were able to rescue him, then that wouldn't necessarily be a good thing, either. Avery greatly influences Dar, and Dar is my only weakness. I don't want to see Dar be hurt or manipulated if my

enemy tried to use Avery to threaten me in a indirect way.

If Avery were like me and saw Dar as precious family that he would never abandon, then I might have thought about rescuing him. However, his betrayal has shown me that he has never thought of Dar like that. Or maybe I should I say that he did treat Dar like family, but, evidently, that family isn't as important to him as his life or his experiments?

A person like that, who influences Dar yet doesn't care about him, is much too dangerous!

Devon held his head in one hand. His ruby red eyes, hidden within the shadows of his palm, revealed a mercilessly bloodthirsty expression.

"Avery must be eradicated!"

This is definitely the right course of action. I must take it. But the best choice means that Dar will be sad...

Why? Why is it that I am at the pinnacle of power and authority, yet I am still unable to prevent my little brother from being hurt? It is such a simple wish, but why am I unable to fulfil it?

How can I be called the Solaris Emperor? I am only a weak older brother that can't even make his little brother happy. Even when choosing which path to take, I don't even know if what I'm doing is right or wrong.

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It was an identical experiment lab, filled with the best equipment. It was still as messy, and the same figure, standing as still as death while he worked, was still there.

There didn't seem to be any change in anything. The only thing that was missing was a silver-haired youth that would always barge in and rush about, grumbling and muttering as he reported his older brother's detailed and lengthy orders. Then he would tidy up some of the things lying around, saying that he would bring him dinner afterwards.

Normally, the moment I heard those overly long and tiring commands, I would think that it was annoying and loud, making me unable to concentrate on my experiments. However, right now, I can't help but think that this experiment lab feels much too quiet. It's so deathly quiet that it is impossible for me to do my experiments peacefully.

It wasn't like this in the past. Before, I would have given everything I had for a quiet and undisturbed lab. But now... has something changed?

Avery's mind kept going over the same things. Although he wanted to analyse what the problem was exactly, he also knew that the general problem lay with the loud youth. It's just that he could not—would not—admit that. In this situation, where he had betrayed that youth, what was the point in admitting it?

"I heard that Devon has already relayed the order to kill you."

A man's soft voice brought his attention back. He didn't turn his head and he only replied faintly, "Oh, really?" As he spoke, the scalpel moved

quickly in his hands.

"You don't care?"

Yue Baylian's beautiful, slender figure came out from the shadows. His expression revealed a charming smile as he used his long fingers to curl around a lock of hair. Almost as if he were acting coyly, he purred. "In the past, not a single person the Solaris Emperor has ordered to be killed has survived, you know?"

"I know. I've read the Solaris Federation's employee handbooks. It's written there clearly."

Avery lightly pushed his glasses up his nose and recalled the rules written in the handbook. The line detailing the consequences of being a traitor was written out quite obviously. It was just missing the specifics of how each of the punishments was executed.

Yue Baylian strode along lightly, shifting to the side of the doctor. He moved his face right next to his ear, and as he breathed lightly against him he tenderly said, "Oooh, so you've prepared yourself to fall. Down. Into. Hell... Already? Dear Dr. Avery."

"Instead of me, why don't you worry more about yourself," Avery replied flatly, not shifting his concentration from the work at hand. "The pressure from the Solaris Emperor's side must be hard to handle."

Hearing this, Yue Baylian's voice suddenly became cold. "That is not for you to worry about."

Avery's heart couldn't help but feel a slight twinge of pleasure. Devon really hasn't let this guy have it easy.

Possibly because he could tell what Avery was thinking, Yue Baylian stopped acting sweet and delicate. He huffed coldly and then continued on in a brusque tone. "The Solaris Emperor has issued the order to have you killed. That man won't waste any time in attacking us with full force. We can't stay here anymore. Hurry up and pack up everything and be ready to leave."

"Okay." Avery nodded his head.

"Have you created a modified human capable of using the Reaper's Scythe yet?"

"No," Avery said blatantly.

Crack! Yue Baylian slapped him hard in the face. "Avery! I'm warning you. I don't have much patience!" he bellowed.

Avery slowly turned his head back. Half of his face was red and swollen, but he didn't flinch or seem to care at all. He remained apathetic towards the whole situation as he replied emotionlessly.

"I can see that you have no patience, and I already told you in the beginning that the Reaper's Scythe requires the compatibility of one that has both extremely high speed and power. It is not something just any modified human can control. Even if they don't need to utilise the full

capabilities of the Reaper's Scythe, merely being able to control it at all is something that requires at least three months of constant alterations, tests, and experiments."

Yue Baylian's complexion became terrible. He knew that it needed three months. Avery had said so from the start, so of course he knew. But how could the Solaris Emperor possibly give him three months?

Previously, he had relied on the fact that Devon didn't want to kill Avery, which prevented him from acting rashly in order to protect Avery's safety. However, now that Devon had issued the order to kill Avery, his subordinates wouldn't need to worry about hostage safety, allowing them to move much more freely.

Have I been too reckless? Yue Baylian couldn't help biting the nail on his index finger, thinking. Maybe leaving that morse code message may have really...

No. No matter what, Devon wouldn't allow Avery to stay in enemy hands for three months. At most, it would only go on for six weeks. If he still couldn't save Avery, then he would definitely issue the order to kill him.

If it's like that, then I'll bet on this. First, I'll lure out Dark Sun and then think about the rest.

"Forget it. Cease the plan for creating a modified human that can control the Reaper's Scythe. How many modified humans have you altered?"

"Three. If you hadn't disturbed me just now then there may have been four," Avery couldn't help but reply cynically.

Slap!

"Don't mock me. After you finish packing, leave," Yue Baylian ordered, voice icy.

Avery turned his head back. "Yes," he responded blandly.

Yue Baylian snorted once more and then turned and left.

After Yue Baylian was gone, Avery once again began using his scalpel. "How funny. Between having a gun pointed at my head and being slapped, I actually prefer the former," he muttered sarcastically. "At least as long as the trigger isn't pulled, it wouldn't hurt. But then again, if the trigger were really to be pulled, I probably wouldn't feel the pain either."

In addition, at least Dar would bother him to make sure he ate dinner and breakfast. Unlike here! Even if I were to starve to death, no one would care.

But what am I doing right now? Altering several powerful corpses to destroy the person that always nags at me to eat! Avery stopped moving his surgical knife and laughed bitterly at his own actions.

But it should be okay. Devon, who has a brother complex, will definitely protect him properly. No matter how strong these modified humans are, they wouldn't be able to hurt the Solaris Emperor's beloved little brother

when he is aware of, and vigilant against, the enemy.

That guy that always does things to the extreme would most likely have a whole bunch of Delta Force soldiers equipped with heavy artillery acting as a human shield, blocking any threats from getting past. He would make sure his beloved Dar was surrounded by layer upon layer of armed guards. The perimeter might look like a normal house, but it would really be a fortress-like building that could even easily withstand missiles.

With these kinds of fortifications, even if a bomber aircraft was sent—let alone just a few modified humans—Dar wouldn't be in any danger of being hurt.

That's right! Even if there were four or five modified humans Dar would definitely not be hurt.

Once more, the scalpel in his hands moved swiftly.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c06 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 7

Translators: LilsxD, Wryn

Proofreaders, Catchkatch, Arc, Wryn

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"Bill, it has already been three days. Why hasn't Dar been found yet?" asked Devon expressionlessly, leaning forward with both hands on the table.

He knew that the Solaris Emperor would not accept any reasons for failure, but since his boss opened his mouth to ask, as his subordinate he could only dutifully reply.

"It seems that Young Master Daren knows very clearly where the security cameras are located throughout the city. Consequently, not even a single camera was able to capture his image, making it much harder to track him. At the same time, he hasn't sought help from any of his friends, used his credit card, withdrawn money, or left the country. And none of our spies within major organisations have reported capturing anyone that matches Young Master Daren's description."

Hearing this, Devon's expression eased a little. Initially, he was worried that the lack of news about Dar was because he had been captured.

Kyle continued reporting. "At this moment, we have changed our course of action to combing the ground for the young master's whereabouts. Unless the young master has already left the city, we will definitely have news of him in the next two days."

"Dar needs to eat quite a lot each meal. How could he have not withdrawn money?" Devon's brows furrowed. Didi isn't starving himself right now, is he?

Kyle didn't speak, but he was rather uncertain about this fact as well. Young Master obviously had an amazing appetite, and so if he did not use money to buy food, he could only steal it. However, he had already checked the whole city and its surroundings; there were no reports of a large quantities of food being stolen or lost... It felt as if Daren had disappeared completely.

Although Devon was extremely worried about Dar's situation, as long as his little brother had not fallen into someone else's hands, then he should not need to worry about Dar's safety. Since he could not find him at the moment, he could only go about it in a different way.

"How is the situation with Yue Baylian?" Devon asked.

"The assault on the laboratory was successful, but the target had already been moved to another location. At this point, we are pursuing any leads remaining."

Hearing this, Devon's fingers tapped the table in unspoken acknowledgement. The Solaris Emperor did not have anything further to add, implying that he also agreed with how Kyle had handled it.

Kyle continued with the next report.

"With regards to the investigation on people who have close ties with

Yue Baylian. We found out that his parents are dead, he has no wife, he has many lovers, but they are frequently replaced. The only one that could be considered as a close relation would be his successor, Shain Baylian. However, according to our findings, Shain Baylian is not his real son, but actually adopted from one of his distant relatives. Their relationship cannot be called close."

"In other words, he doesn't have anyone he particularly cares about?"

Devon's expression hardened. People like Yue Baylian were the most annoying; this information proved that he did not care about anything and that he would act unscrupulously without reserve. At the same time, it was quite clear that the plan to threaten him with someone beloved had to be aborted.

"Yes." Kyle nodded his head.

Once again, Devon reverted back to his expressionless self, tapping the table with his index finger.

Kyle continued. "As for bringing down the Lunar Alliance, we have begun gradually absorbing their shares under different company names and freezing some of their assets. However, the Lunar Alliance is extensive, with banks under their umbrella, coupled with their long standing business roots, we're unable to inflict any fatal damage to them with such short notice..."

"I know that," said Devon, a bit frustrated as he interrupted the report. "Which of the top ten trade cartels is not strong and solid with well-equipped financial backing? I haven't once thought that we could take

down the Lunaris Alliance quickly. We only need to make it known that we're in opposition to the Lunaris Alliance. The other organisations and smaller businesses will align themselves accordingly. Even if they don't end their partnerships with the Lunaris Alliance, they would put their collaborations on hold. All this news building up would be enough for the Lunaris Alliance's shares to hit rock bottom."

The moment the shares dropped it would be much easier to buy them up, and with some manipulation under the table, it would be possible to have their properties change hands with them being none the wiser. At the same time, as long as the Solaris Group shared a large part of the benefits with the other organisations, the others would not protest about the Solaris Emperor destroying the Lunaris Alliance.

Only the Solaris Emperor, the economic leader, could succeed with this kind of method. It seems like the Solaris Emperor is set on making the Lunaris Group completely disappear, Kyle thought to himself.

"Once the Lunaris Alliance collapse, so what if Yue Baylian has Avery in the palm of his hand?" Devon snorted.

At this moment, Kyle received a message on his computer. As the message title was related to the Lunaris Alliance, he chose to take care of the message immediately. He opened the message and read the contents, froze for a moment, and then quickly reported. "Solaris Emperor.. The Lunaris Group has requested for both leaders to meet."

"Oh?"

Hearing this news, Devon faintly smiled. It seems like someone has

started to realise that he is in a dire situation.

"The other party requests an immediate reply. The meeting time will be two days from now at 12pm, and they will decide the location."

As Kyle was reporting, he frowned. This was a really rude and unreasonable demand. Even if it were a mere CEO of a regular firm--let alone the economic leader Devon Solaris--they would usually would have their schedule planned a month in advance. This type of impromptu request demanding a meeting in two days was absolutely unreasonable.

In addition, the other party wanted an immediate reply, and they would also decide where they would be meeting. Were they looking down on the Solaris Emperor, like a subordinate? This was extremely disrespectful.

Hearing this, Devon scowled. What makes Yue Baylian think that I will accede to his demand?

At that moment, Kyle suddenly realised that the message had an attachment. To think that I actually didn't notice that immediately. It seems like I really have been overworking myself recently... I guess I'll just have to brace myself and report this.

"Solaris Emperor, this email has an attachment, and it seems to be a photo."

"Oh?" As expected, Devon coldly shot a glance at him. "Print it out," he ordered.

Kyle opened the photo without thinking and only after he pressed the

print button did he actually notice what was in the photo. His heart immediately sank.

Young Master Daren...

Devon casually took the picture from the machine. But once he set his eyes upon it, he bellowed, "Dar!"

The person in the photo really was Daren. Or, more accurately, it was Dark Sun. In the photo, he was locked up in a prison cell. The other party had clearly been afraid of his abilities, as they had used materials stronger than mere iron bars to make the prison cell an impenetrable fortress. For even more security, the walls had also been covered in a dense net of laser beams.

Dark Sun's hands and legs were not tied up, but it looked like he had no way of escaping from this kind of prison cell, and so he could only wander back and forth inside.

"Bill!" Devon roared again.

"Yes, Sir. Analysing the authenticity of photo. Please give me five minutes..."

Without needing the Solaris Emperor's exact orders, Kyle had already found the most competent subordinate in the relevant area of expertise and asked him to deal with it as quickly as possible to determine the photo's authenticity.

Hearing this, Devon lowered his head and looked at the photo. Although Dar did not show any hint of panic on his face, Devon still felt a crushing pain in his heart. His beloved Didi had actually been held captive by his enemy in a prison and treated like a criminal.

If this isn't taken care of properly, I'm afraid Dar's situation could become even worse. The hand grabbing onto the edge of the photo trembled unconsciously at the thought.

"Solaris Emperor, it has been verified. The photo is not fabricated."

Seeing Devon's hand, Kyle was shaken. Now the Solaris Emperor's biggest weakness is in the hands of the enemy. How will he react to this?

Hearing this, Devon slowly reclined in his desk chair. His thoughts continued circling, trying to find the best solution. "Agree to the Lunaris Alliance's demand. Assemble our Elite Combat Unit. I remember Dar mentioning that his friend Eli has a strange power; find him."

"Yes."

After Devon finished relaying his orders, he thought for a bit and added more instructions.

"Find Elian and that other girl as well. Dar also seemed to think that their combat abilities weren't weak."

Hearing this order, Kyle hesitantly said, "But... they are not professionals. They are still children..."

"Are you saying that Dar isn't a child, then?" Devon coldly replied.

"Understood."

"Then, has the porcupine head woken up yet?" asked Devon with an even more ruthless tone. He grinned coldly. Dar treated that guy so well. It is only right that he should die for Dar in return.

"No."

Hearing his tone, Kyle knew that none of his suggestions would get through to the Solaris Emperor in his current state. He was only instinctively using every resource that could be of use, not leaving anything out. However, Kyle intuitively felt that that was not very wise.

If something were to happen to Young Master Daren's friends because they wanted to save him, then the young master would be sad, right? Just by looking at the incident where the young master ran away from home, it is obvious that the Solaris Emperor is inept at dealing with things involving emotions!

It was easy to understand, after all, an enormous financial organisation like the Solaris Federation was not run by feelings. Holding the supreme position of Solaris Emperor for as long as he had, the people around Devon Solaris were simply identified as loyal subordinates that obeyed his orders, or enemies that did not. It probably was not an easy task for him to understand the feelings and bonds between friends, or things like his little brother rebelling against his wishes.

Kyle could not help but sigh quietly in his heart. When will these two brothers finally find the right way to treat each other?

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“My brother has been captured. On the day of negotiation, I want you to use your powers to scout out his location,” Devon crossed his hands on his knees, commanding Eli who was sitting opposite him.

“What did you say!? Dar has been captured?” Eloise yelled in disbelief as Elian frowned.

Eli was silent. He knew he did not have the power to say no to the Solaris Emperor. But if he were to start probing the enemy’s mind to help the Solaris Emperor find Dar, would he ever be able to extricate himself?

“How was Dar captured? And what happened to Ezart? He hasn’t been at school for nearly a week. Could he have been captured just like Dar?” Elian suddenly asked.

Eli stared at the ground as he was filled with appreciation and gratefulness for Elian. Although he knew that Elian really did want to know the answers to those questions, his main intention was to help Eli out. He was buying him more time to probe through the Solaris Emperor’s thoughts and determine the pros and cons, before he responded to the Solaris Emperor’s request.

Devon raised his eyebrow at Elian's questions. Although Devon could not read minds like Eli, how could such simple intentions not be detected by the king of a business world that was constantly at war?

Although he knew what Elian was trying to get at, he still needed to answer his questions. Additionally, letting them know more of Dar's situation would also encourage them to help save Dar. Devon decided to go with the flow of the conversation.

"No, Ezart is unconscious because he drank a poison Avery left behind."

"...Huh?" The three of them froze.

"As for Dar, he has been captured by the enemy because he tried to save Avery. Right now, the enemy wants to negotiate."

Hearing this, the three of them were stunned. Coming to his senses first, Elian faintly mumbled, "No wonder Dar was captured; he must have been too hasty in trying to save Avery. And if he didn't hurry to save Avery, Ezart would probably die too. Dar really likes them. If something were to happen to the both of them, Dar would be heartbroken."

It was Devon's turn to be stunned. So that was what Dar was thinking? Going to save Avery wasn't only for Avery, but also for Ezart?

"Oh no!" Eloise paced back and forth, worried. "Dar is probably blaming himself again! Every time he does something wrong, he gets extremely upset and would keep on saying that he's stupid, and doesn't

understand anything. Ahh!... Anyway, let's hurry up and save him! Elian! Eli!"

The two looked at Eloise haplessly. They hadn't even thought it through, and yet Eloise had already decided to set out?

"Dar isn't stupid at all!" bellowed Devon as he slammed a fist on the table. Who dares to say Dar is stupid!?

"Right! Right!" Eloise loudly agreed. "Dar is the cutest, but he himself doesn't even know. I tell you something: one time, Dar even asked me whether or not he was ugly."

"What?" Devon jumped up from his office chair and roared. "Who would dare say he's ugly?!"

"That's right! He's obviously not ugly. Dar is drop dead adorable!" Eloise nodded as-a-matter-of-factly.

Devon replied imperiously, "Of course. My Dar is the cutest. He's always been as cute as a lump of dough since young."

Are lumps of dough cute...? Kyle continued typing with an expressionless face at the periphery.

"Really? Do you have a picture of him as a kid? Can I have a look please?"

"Of course I do. Here's Dar when he's five." Devon whipped out his locket containing a miniature picture within.

"Kya! Super duper cute!"

"Of course my brother is cute."

"Do you have any others?"

"Yes, but not here."

..... From a certain perspective, Solaris Emperor might have a lot in common with Eloise. Elian and Eli observed the pair silently.

"Solaris Emperor, Lunaris Alliance has replied." Kyle reported evenly.

"Let me tell you. I have a few hundred photos of Dar when he was little, even enlarged close ups..... Eh? Oh, erhem!" Devon suddenly realised that he was not here for a show and tell of Dar's photo.

He snatched the locket from Eloise's hands in one swift move. He sat down emotionlessly and recovered his regality as he placed both hands upon his knees. "Speak."

"The appointed time is noon tomorrow, at a restaurant in the suburbs. Both parties are allowed four servants."

Devon grunted in acknowledgement and turned his eyes upon Eli, "Have you come to a decision?"

Eli lowered his head in thought, he said in resignation, "If you will promise me a few conditions....."

"Speak." Devon smiled faintly, thinking that it ultimately came down to an exchange of benefits between businessmen, and not friendship!

"If anyone were to coerce me into using my power, or try to assassinate me, you have to help me stop it. In exchange, I can help you read other's mind, but only thrice a year."

"Hmph!" Devon smirked.

"Are you not satisfied with these conditions?" Eli asked warily.

Although he could read the Solaris Emperor's mind, but to find the answer within a brain more than ten times as convoluted as a regular person was too difficult. By asking a direct question, even if the answer was not verbalised, it would surface to the forefront of Solaris Emperor's mind, making it easier to glimpse telepathically.

"As long as you can determine my brother's whereabouts, you will be listed under my Elite group. No one would dare to touch you. As for the condition of reading minds thrice a year, you can dispense with it."

Solaris Emperor gradually stood, emanating the confidence of a monarch, he announced, "I have never needed to rely on telepathy to

determine an opponent's moves."

Eli was speechless. Even after asking a question, he still could not gather the answer telepathically. He could not tell if it was because the Solaris Emperor's thought processes was too quick for him to read, or if he was thinking of a multitude of things simultaneously, hence burying the answer.

"I understand."

Although he could not read the Solaris Emperor's mind, Eli still nodded in agreement because the conditions he proposed were too good. He did not harbour hopes of being able to reject the Solaris Emperor to begin with. He was even mentally prepared to become his subordinate. For him to be able to complete just a single mission without ever being forced to use telepathy for posterity, in addition to receiving the protection of the Solaris Emperor was like a gift from heaven..... As long as the Solaris Emperor had no intentions of silencing him after the mission.

Although Eli had this suspicion, could he really escape the Solaris Emperor's grasp if he really wanted to assassinate him? He'd probably be vaporised before he could take a step out of the city.

His only hopes lay in saving Dar, getting him to stop his brother from assassinating him, and keeping his promise on account of their friendship.

"Eli is definitely coming along." Devon tilted his head elegantly as he glanced at the other two, "As for the both of you....."

"I want to come with! I'm strong and can definitely help out." Elian hurriedly interrupted, worried about Dar's safety and the possibility of Eli's execution.

"I want to go too!" Eloise chimed in hastily.

"No you can't!" Eli and Elian responded simultaneously.

"Why?" Eloise yelled in displeasure.

If the Solaris Emperor really wanted to silence Eli, it would be easier for two to escape. Especially since Eloise was not speedy, making it more difficult..... But this could not be spoken before the Solaris Emperor.

Not able to think of a credible reason, Elian sighed inwardly and blurted out what he thought was an incredulous excuse, "You have to take care of Ezart and bring him to us after he awakes!"

"Is that so?" Eloise frowned, "Ok then. I will wait for Ezart to wake up. Dar likes Ezart so much, if he saw Ezart going to rescue him, he would be very happy."

Solaris Emperor smiled faintly, "In that case, you can stay with Kyle. He can tell you where to find us when it's time."

Elian and Eli paled. Did Eloise just become a hostage?

Eloise remained oblivious to her companion's unease. She thudded her

chest firmly in assurance, "Don't worry! The moment Ezart wakes up, I will bring him to you."

Eloise..... Elian and Eli heaved a sigh silently. It looked like they could only put all their efforts into saving Dar and getting him to stop the Solaris Emperor from executing them.

Elian asked, "In that case, please tell us the plan so that we can coordinate with you, Solaris Emperor."

"Very simple. I will let the negotiations fall through, but not to the extent of angering them, then set a date for the next meeting." Devon gestured at Eli as he ordered, "You will determine where Dar is being held captive during the negotiation."

Eli nodded, "If you can ask where Dar is, it will be easier for me to find the answer."

Solaris Emperor grunted again in acknowledgement. Everything had been prepared in anticipation for tomorrow's negotiation. Dar, you must wait for gege. Please don't get hurt, please don't.....

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Instead of expending resources in search of Avery, getting captured and brought in was much faster.

Daren circled the room gradually. Avery's morse code message was a trap after all. The moment he reached the appointed location, there were four modified humans waiting for him. He could have escaped but once he did that, he would not be able to find out where Avery was.

Instead of retreating in failure, he might as well get captured.

"Anyway, regardless of what kind of prison, as long as there's a door, it cannot keep me in!"

Daren circled his cell. It was a typical impenetrable cell. The thickness of the wall held no significance. The crux lay in the mechanism of the lock. According to the current standards, there was a 90% chance of it being an electronic lock.

A quick look at the door revealed that it was indeed an electronic lock opened with a swipe card.

Daren walked over for closer inspection. There was a beam of laser hidden from view before the lock. Any attempts at tampering with the lock would result in burns.

However, he extended his left hand without reservation. The laser beam would at most burn his flesh but would not be able to sever his galvanised bones. The stench of charred flesh permeated as soon as his hand came into contact with the laser, half of his pale elegant hand reduced to a black stump.

Yet, he remained impassive, as if his burnt hand was only a piece of wood. He placed his hand before the electronic lock and bent his wrist backwards, breaking it. From the centre of his broken bone came a metallic flash, a port extended forthwith.

Daren expressionlessly watched the inhuman hand in action. As he hated it when he used his inhuman powers, he dared not display this skill. In fact, computer hacking is also one of his attributes.

"What are you doing? Stay away from the lock! Or I will fire!" A voice rang out over the announcement system, his jailers realising that something was amiss.

Daren ignored it as he continued hacking into the computer system.

Four machine guns emerged noiselessly from the corners of his cell, firing off two warning shots that were easily dodged by Daren.

"Get away from the lock or we will engage in automatic mode."

Daren gradually raised both hands, returning his left hand to the original form and stepping away the door.

"That's it, step further away!"

Daren walked to the centre of his cell and raised his head innocently in question, "Is this ok?"

"Just stand there, don't go near the lock." The voice petering into

muffled mumblings, "What the hell. Is that boy man or machine?"

Lowering his head, an inconspicuous thread lay on the ground connecting his left hand to the lock. That was a fibre optic cable, allowing him to continue hacking into the electronic system regardless of how far away he physically was.

Once I run out, those people who want to shoot me must get a fright! He revealed an extremely adorable smile at that thought. He crossed his legs into a lotus position, hiding the majority of the silver thread beneath his bum.

Only three more minutes before I can go save papa Avery!

Daren was so happy he started whistling, the picture of an innocent boy. But this innocent smile juxtaposed with his charred left hand struck a eerie chord, raising goosebumps on the jailers watching behind the security camera.

Three minutes passed by very quickly while he was whistling a merry tune. Daren glanced at the lock from the corner of his eye and gave a command to unlock the door in his mind. He reeled the silver thread back into his wrist as the cell door swung open. In a flash, his silhouette vanished as he bolted out of the cell.

Silence reigned for a few seconds before his jailers responded. The alarm went off as the announcement system reverberated with panicked cries, "Pri... Prisoner has escaped!"

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c07 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 8

Translators: Fly, Wryn

Proofer: Wryn

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It was an elegantly and plainly decorated restaurant in the suburbs, meant to aid in relaxation. However, there was not a single waiter inside, only two groups of people at each end of a table. The tension was like a highly strung bow, at risk of snapping any moment.

“Long time no see, Solaris Emperor.”

Yue Baylian was the first to break the silence, in a voice as sticky sweet as honey. He even threw a few flirtatious winks at him. There were four cyborgs standing upright behind him, devoid of all expression.

“Indeed it has.” Devon Solaris replied with a faint smile before calling out in a softer, gentler tone, “Yuer.”

Upon hearing this, Yue was stunned for a moment, uncontrollably blurting out, “Dev, you.....”

He was about to continue when he noticed the Solaris Emperor’s pair of ruby red eyes. Although his face wore a smile, his eyes were not those that belong to an arrogant yet somewhat doltish Dev, this smile was just a façade the scheming Solaris Emperor used when dealing with enemies.

Seeing this, Yue gave a flirtatious laugh and said, “So you still

remember me. Yuer feels so honored! Yuer thought that you have never cared!"

Devon Solaris smiled, "Nonsense, I have never forgotten your beautiful posture and moves as you brandished your whip."

"Hehehe, Yuer has never realized that Solaris Emperor has such a sweet mouth!"

"But how it pales in contrast to your sweet face?"

"Hehe....."

Why does their conversation seem as though they are reminiscing, even like a couple flirting with each other, yet the atmosphere appears to be steadily deteriorating? Elia and Eli who were standing behind the Solaris Emperor did not know whether to laugh or cry.

Yue put aside his amorous attitude and smiled faintly, "Even the sweetest face cannot capture Solaris Emperor's briefest attention. For Solaris Emperor to spare a glance my way is even tougher than administering the entire Lunar Alliance."

On hearing this, the Solaris Emperor knew that the time for niceties had ended and it was time to cut to the chase. Sighing he said, "Why do you have to oppose me just because of some minute incidents in the past? I do not want pandemonium to break out in the business sector due to our rivalry. It will not bring either of us any benefits. Yuer, it was indeed my fault, I should not have forgotten you."

"Let us reconcile and not continue hurting each other further, alright?"

Hearing this, Yue revealed a mirthless smile, thinking that the Solaris Emperor was indeed worthy of his name and reputation. First he proposed a truce from the standpoint of a businessman concerned about potential losses. Then he mentions that it's actually for the sake of their friendship, completely ignoring the hostage situation, so that Yuer would think that his captive was worthless.

If he had not discovered that Dark Sun was in fact the younger brother of the Solaris Emperor, he might have fallen for that.

Unfortunately, no matter how cleverly his lies were told or how perfectly the arrangements were made, he would never be deceived. Because it was Devon himself who told him that the reason he became the Solaris Emperor, the God of Commerce, was for a single cause – to find his brother.

To say that Devon Solaris would not care about the well-being of his brother..... Ha! Saying that he did not care about the destruction of the world is more believable.

"Solaris Emperor, since you put it this way, I really want to reconcile with you!" Yue smiled knowingly. "I'll return Theodore Avery to you then. However, there is no way I can return you the bodyguard. He tried to escape so I killed him!"

Devon Solaris abruptly stood up, eyes wide and face paper white.

Yue held up his hands, replying innocently, "Aiya! Solaris Emperor, he's merely a bodyguard, why get so worked up?"

Devon forced out a grim smile before slowly settling down once again. Yue couldn't have killed Dar! Since the picture of the hostage was that of Dar and not Avery, then he should know that the person he could threaten me with is Dar, so he couldn't have killed him, he was just scaring me, scaring me... ..

Even though Devon Solaris was 90% sure that Dar was still alive, he was still afraid to the extent that he was trembling slightly. Giving a wry smile, he wondered if he was still the Solaris Emperor? To think that a lie could actually frighten him so much.

Seeing the smile on Yue's face increasingly widen, Devon Solaris knew that his weakness had been discovered by the other party and he could no longer hide it.

He replied in a serious tone, "Speak! What's the condition for release? Remember that the annihilation of the Lunaris Alliance does not pose a challenge to me at all."

"If that's what you want, go ahead. Do you really think that I care about the fate of the Lunaris Alliance?" Yue gave him an indifferent look.

This time round, Devon had a sense of foreboding. He recalled the incident where they bombed his headquarters with not a shred of concern about the potential collapse of the worldwide economy. Devon Solaris rarely faced these type of opponents where benefits were not their

goal and were willing to risk self destruction.

Calming himself down, "Then what do you want?"

"What do I want?" Yue blinked a few times before replying, "Don't you have any idea?"

"What?" Devon Solaris frowned. Indeed, he could not grasp what Yue wanted.

"I want..... hehe..... hahaha! You still don't know?" Yue's soft giggles soon turned into hysterical laughter, "I want you to suffer! Solaris Emperor, I want you to feel more pain then I did when you forgot about me after you were done using me, hahaha!"

"You are crazy!" Devon Solaris slammed his fist down onto the table, bellowing, "I have no time for your nonsense! Where is he?"

On hearing his query, Eli who was standing behind him lowered his head and closed his eyes, whole-heartedly trying his best to read Yue's thoughts on Daren's whereabouts.....

"Right beneath your feet." Yue casually replied.

Devon Solaris froze. What, what does it mean? Is it a trap? Or.....

"It's true!"

At the same moment, Eli whispered in panic, "He, he has even loaded nuclear warheads below....."

Although he spoke softly, everyone present still heard him. Apart from the four modified humans standing behind Yue who were emotionless, all the others got a fright.

"Oh?" Yue could not help looking at Eli, raising an eyebrow, "What an interesting kid, but not to worry, even if it exploded, none of us will be affected, however the people below.....he! Let's not talk about ashes, have you ever seen a nuclear warhead going off? Humans will be instantly vaporised!"

His heart aching, Devon Solaris bellowed, "If you kill him, I will never let you off!"

Yue held up his hands, blinking innocently, "That doesn't matter. If I can see the world's most beautifully pained look on your face due to the lost of your precious brother, I will not have any regrets even if I die."

Devon expression turned ugly, he asked darkly, "What exactly do you want?"

"Haven't I said it already? I see that Solaris Emperor's memory is not that good?"

Devon Solaris was silent for a moment before saying, "Let him go. You can take me instead. You can torture me in any way you want."

Yue gave a sweet smile, "Deal. Follow me down, then I will release him."

Devon Solaris hesitated for a moment. What if he was captured but Yue still refused to let Dar go?

Noticing Devon's hesitance, Yue gave a faint smile, "Don't worry. It is you I want right from the beginning. With you in hand, your brother is worthless to me."

Devon glanced at Eli, and after the latter nodded to signify that Yue was telling the truth, he took a deep breath and said, "Got it. Then, bring me to my brother now. I want to see you release him personally."

"No problem." A smile grew on Yue's face as he stood up, making a gesture for Devon Solaris to follow.

"Solaris Emperor....." Elian called after him anxiously. Are they supposed to let Dar's brother be taken away right before their eyes?

Devon threw a glance back at Eli, the latter looked as if somebody had used a loudspeaker next to his ears, and was almost struck unconscious by Devon's message.

Stay above and wait for Dar. Once you meet up with him, take him away immediately. Let Bill deal with the rest. All you have to do is ensure Dar's safety. Even it means paying with your lives, you have to stop him from coming back to rescue me! Do you hear me?!

Eli grabbed onto Elian to stop himself from collapsing onto the ground from dizziness. Drooping his head, he nodded slightly.

Seeing this, Devon averted his gaze, and said impassively to Yue, "Let's go."

Yue looked at Eli suspiciously but failed to speculate Devon's thoughts. However, recalling Solaris Emperor's panic-stricken expression when he heard the false information about his brother being dead, he guessed he would not dare to risk his brother evaporating from the surface of the planet.

"Let's go, my beloved Solaris Emperor." Yue dared not lower his guard yet. Only when he has the Solaris Emperor completely in his hands would he be able to relax.

Devon glanced at Yue, then, like a high and mighty aristocrat, he walked passed Yue casually, as though he was an invited guest instead of a hostage.

"Dark Sun has escaped?"

Yue had just brought Devon Solaris to their underground base when a subordinate approached with the report. On hearing that, quirky looks surfaced on both their faces. Especially Devon, the corner of his lips twitching uncontrollably. He had not expected Daren to escape by himself. Aren't I just asking for trouble this time?

Yue glanced at Solaris Emperor with a smile that did not reach his eyes, "This is great. He has escaped before I could release him. You can finally rest assured this time round."

Devon looked away, ignoring his dig.

Yue pondered about how overly easy it had been to capture Dark Sun and smelled something fishy. It seemed that he was indeed trying to rescue Avery by walking into the trap.

"Was Avery rescued as well?"

The subordinate who was half-kneeling on the ground reported, "Mr. Avery is still in the laboratory."

Yue said, "Kill him."

Devon said, "Kill him!"

Yue gave Devon Solaris an odd look, the latter actually wanted Avery dead too?

Having Avery around was beneficial for Dark Sun. Be it repair work after a battle, upgrading modifications, or even the creation of more modified humans. This was also advantageous for the rescue of Devon. If Dark Sun turned up with some modified humans in tow, it was possible for them to rescue Devon. That was why he wanted Avery dead. But why would the Solaris Emperor want him dead?

Noticing Yue's expression, Devon coldly replied, "Traitors must die."

"Even if he is very useful?" Yue raised an eyebrow in query. It had always been a businessman's nature to fully make use of all the resources made available to them. Throwing away such talent without a second thought was such a waste.

Devon Solaris merely sneered, "If somebody useful is not loyal, the more he should be killed. If he betrays me, his usefulness will bring benefits to my enemies."

"I see."

Yue nodded. The Solaris Emperor was indeed worthy of his reputation. It was probably his viciousness that helped him rise to his status of the God of Commerce. But was it possible that he was trying to use reverse psychology on him? To make him change his mind and let Avery live instead?

"If that's the case, how about I let you kill that traitor with your own hands?"

Devon smiled, "There is nothing better than that."

Yue scrutinised his face a few times, but that handsome face of his showed nothing but his usual haughty expression. He really could not tell what he was thinking!

Even though he was currently his hostage, he had never once lowered his head in submission, nor changed his expression when giving a command to kill. It was impossible to know the thoughts of someone

like him even with telepathic abilities.

"Follow me please, Solaris Emperor."

A hint of gentleness surfaced on Yue's face. Devon was exactly like that in the past as well! Even when a delinquent wanted to punch him, he calmly replied that he wanted to experience the feeling of getting beaten up.....ha! If it had been the other normal young aristocrats, they would have long been overwhelmed with rage.

Devon Solaris took the first step, his posture displaying no hint that he was a hostage. Yue followed to his right, four modified humans enhanced by Avery trailing behind them. All in all, he looked as though he was the king out on an inspection.

Whenever they reached a fork along the corridor, Devon Solaris would glance at Yue out of the corner of his eyes and the latter would point out the correct path for him to take.

When they reached an electronic door, Yue walked forward and slid a card through the reader, activating the door.

Avery was indeed inside. He was rather jumpy, probably because he was caught off guard by their sudden appearance. He asked with a weird expression, "Devon, it's you?"

"Long time no see, Avery." Devon smiled.

Yet, this smile raised Avery's goosebumps and gave him a sense of

foreboding doom.

"I'll cut the crap. You should have come to a realisation long ago when you betrayed me." Devon continued smiling with the addition of a BHP09 handgun in his hand pointed straight at Avery.

Yue glanced from the corner of his eyes but paid it no need, allowing his captive to remain armed.

Seeing this, Avery blanched as he roared, "St... Stop! Devon don't kill me. At least not now....."

Hmph! As if Devon would heed his words. He raised his silver handgun emotionlessly, "Goodbye Avery."

A shot rang out. But a silhouette swifter than a gunshot flashed before Avery. He had to take the bullet in his arm due to the sudden development, the bullet penetrating deep into his flesh.

Devon stared wide eyed, unable to believe that the person who shielded Avery, whom he injured with his own bullet was his.....

"D...Dar! What are you doing here?"

Daren did not reply, unable to comprehend the rapidly changing situations. What is gege doing here? Not to mention he is standing beside Yue without a hint of being coerced. Is gege really that determined to kill papa Avery?

"Don't move Dark Sun!"

Yue quickly drew out his whip, knocked Devon's handgun away with a flick and placed a stranglehold around Devon's neck. After subduing Devon, he ordered the four modified humans to form a shield around them, so that no matter how strong Dark Sun was, he could not rescue Devon.

Yue's actions vanished the bewildered Daren. Dark Sun the ultimate protector of his master emerged instead. He gazed at Yue expressionlessly as he rapidly assessed how to save Devon.

"Kill Avery. Kill him now!" Yue screeched.

He had seen Dark Sun's disfigured left hand which was difficult to heal completely without Avery's skills. He must not allow Avery the opportunity to treat Dark Sun.

"St....." Devon was startled. Dar must not be allowed to kill, especially Avery whom he likes tremendously. He will be heartbroken!

Yue tightened his whip around Devon's neck, cutting off his ability to breath, let alone speak. Devon could only struggle with the whip, hoping to stop his brother from killing.

"Kill Avery, Dark Sun. Or I will kill your brother!"

At that, Dark Sun spun around with the metallic claws of his right hand flashing, his target the same one he selflessly protected only moments ago.

"Dar....."

Avery looked at the expressionless Dark Sun in despair. He knew that Dark Sun would mercilessly exterminate all elements detrimental to his master. Unfortunately, he had just become such a factor.

Resigned to his fate, he heaved a sigh. While Dark Sun was blocking him from the line of vision of the others in the room, he wordlessly mouthed that the Reaper's Scythe was in Yue's study.

Streams of tears trickled down Dark Sun's face even though he remained expressionless as his claws advanced towards Avery.

"Devon, I'll give you one last piece of advice."

Avery peeked his head around Dark Sun saying sincerely, "If you keep on treating your brother like a helpless fledgeling, incidents like this will keep repeating itself."

Devon was stunned. Yet, he still glared fiercely at Avery, telling him to mind his own business.

Ha! The unfathomable Solaris Emperor was just an elder brother who did not know how to educate his younger sibling. Avery thought humorously just as he felt a sharp pain on his chest.....

Dark Sun's tear stained yet emotionless face was right before him, his hand piercing into his chest. The wound looks like.....

Avery looked up and saw tears cascading down Dark Sun's face in ever greater torrents, his hand trembling.....

It fucking hurts. This was the only instance where Dark Sun did not finish off his target immediately with the first blow. It must be because I have a special place in his heart and hence he is unable to kill me directly. Although I'm very touched, this is goddamn freaking painful!

"Dar, can you please..... urgh!"..... let me die quickly? Because it's unbearably painful!

Before he had a chance to complete his sentence, Dark Sun punched him in the chest with his charred left hand, winding him. He collapsed onto the ground, status undeterminable.

Dark Sun turned, "Mission complete!"

Dar!

Devon struggled with the cord around his neck as he took in the sight of a tear-stained Dar with a blood-stained right hand and charred left hand.....

The anguish felt like it would rip his innards apart. It made the high and

mighty Solaris Emperor feel like screaming out loud. How did it come to this?

"Are you suffering, Solaris Emperor?" Yue jerked him closer, fascinated with the anguish written all over his face.

"What a captivating expression. I expected no less from the brother you pined after all those years ago. Only he can make you reveal such beautiful expressions."

You goddamn freak! It's all because of you! You made my Dar sad and full of wounds! Devon's eyes burned with intense ferocity.

"Ha!" Yue snorted. He raised his head, "Dark Sun, destroy your right hand."

Dark Sun faltered. His left hand was almost completely disabled, if he were to destroy his right hand.....

"Hurry up!"

Yue tightened the noose around Devon, cutting off his air supply. His face startled turning purple.

No..... Stop, stop! Devon yelled internally.

Dark Sun made a simple assessment. Under the circumstance where he was against four modified humans previously enhanced by Avery, it was

impossible for him to rescue his master especially when his master was in enemy hands.

He could only follow the instructions for now. Since the command was to destroy his own right hand, he would probably not be killed for the time being. As long as he remained alive he could think of a way to save his master.

Dark Sun hammered his right hand against the wall. With a thunderous sound, his right hand was disfigured into a grotesque shape.

Yue was still unsatisfied. He had witnessed Dark Sun's capabilities. He ordered his four modified humans, "Break his legs."

The modified humans charged forward. Dark Sun took a few steps back, contemplating his course of action. He was still mobile without the use of his hands, but if his legs were broken, not only could he not save his master, it would be difficult for him to even escape.

But he took a look at Devon and did not retaliate, letting the modified humans beat him into the ground while he tried to shield his major organs in order to minimise damage. This way, he could save Master at a later stage.

Dar, don't hurt Dar..... Although Devon's face was a mottled purple from the strangulation, he continued staring as his brother was pummeled. His hands felt cold and numb, his heart frozen. Don't hurt my Dar, I beg you, I'm willing to give you all my possessions if only you would stop hurting him.....

“Solaris Emperor?”

Yue felt a sudden weight on his hand. Only then did he realise that Devon had fainted. He unconsciously revealed a queer expression. One was beaten, yet it's the other that faints?

“Ok. Retreat.”

Now that Dark Sun was sufficiently incapacitated, if he did not leave now, the Solaris Emperor's reinforcements might arrive.

He picked up the unconscious Devon in one swoop and took a glance at Dark Sun who was sprawled on the ground. The latter's injuries were so severe that he could not even use his hands to prop himself up despite several attempts.

Yue picked up the BHP09 from the ground and with a flirtatious smile, aimed it at the struggling Dark Sun.

“Come, cute Dark Sun didi. Just two more shots will do. You know that I'm paranoid, especially since you're so strong. If I don't bring you to the verge of death I can't ease my fears!”

Dark Sun looked down the barrel and saw a spark.....

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"M... Mr. Avery?"

Who's calling me? Is that Dar? Does he want to eat breakfast, lunch or dinner? Urgh! For all you know it might be supper. Dar has been going out with Ezart and his friends for supper recently. He never forgets to return with a heap of food for me.

Avery opened his eyes slowly. Yet all before him was a blur of white. But this was not unusual. Each time he fainted from over exhaustion while conducting his experiments, Dar would lug him to the bedroom. This was a similar feeling to those times when he finally woke up.

He blinked a few times, his eyes finally beginning to focus as that blurry white object turned into a ceiling. Why does it not feel like his bedroom? It resembled a hospital room instead. He raised his left arm and saw an intravenous drip running into it. He was indeed in hospital.

"Papa Avery, you're finally awake!"

Avery turned towards the voice at a glacial pace. A few faces stared happily back at him. He frowned as he spoke with a voice hoarse with disuse, "Eloise....."

"Great! Papa Avery called my name."

Eloise was ecstatic, embracing Eli in a bear hug as she spun around in circles.

Seeing Avery's bewildered expression, Elian explained, "Mr. Avery, you

were injured, you almost didn't make it. The doctors even said that even if you woke up, there was a high chance of becoming a vegetable."

Avery thought hazily, really? That was no big deal. He always got the same feeling that he would not wake up each time he fainted in his laboratory. But Eloise....., you're not allowed to call me papa! Having Dar, the one child is more than enough!

Eloise asked anxiously, "Papa Avery, what happened? Where's Dar?"

"Huh?" Avery rolled his eyes, "I was going to ask you what happened. Did Dar return from rescuing his brother?"

Three of them revealed solemn expressions.

"Dar and the Solaris Emperor are both missing."

"What?" Avery frowned, "What about the Solaris Emperor's all-purpose computer?"

All-purpose computer..... must be referring to Kyle. All three were unsure if they should laugh or cry. What an appropriate name!

Elian sighed, "It's been a week. Even though Kyle has completely taken over the Lunar Alliance, we're still unable to locate Yue. Both the Solaris Emperor and Dar are in his hands."

"Can't find?" Avery laughed mirthlessly, "More like he doesn't want them to be found. Without the Solaris Emperor, Kyle is the highest

ranking member of the Solaris Federation."

"In actual fact, even if the Solaris Emperor were around, Kyle is still the one handling everything right?"

That's true! All four within the hospital room nodded in unison.

Eh? Heads swivelled towards the door where the so called all-purpose computer was standing.

Kyle was dressed in a suit, carrying a briefcase and get-well-soon hamper. He placed the hamper on the table and retrieved his laptop. He began typing away as he said, "I need to know everything that you know to better rescue the Solaris Emperor and young master Daren."

Avery snorted, "Is that good? You'll return to being Solaris Emperor's all-purpose computer catering to his every whim after they are rescued. Or are you afraid that the Solaris Emperor might resurface on his own, hence you have to find him in order to get rid of him once and for all?"

Kyle's expression did not alter despite hearing those words. He continued talking as he typed away, "Mr. Avery, please rest assure that the Solaris Emperor has thought of all the possibilites that you're currently entertaining . He trusts me even then, so what do you have to worry about?"

Avery was rendered speechless. He raised his eyebrow and began describing the events of that day.

"I don't know much. Dar suddenly appeared before me that day....."

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"Papa Avery!"

Avery was pottering with his experiments when he heard a cry that sounded just like Dar's.

"Gosh!" He said self-deprecatingly, "Have I gone without food for so long that I'm having auditory hallucinations of Dar calling me....."

"Papa Avery, over here!"

Avery froze as the ventilation shaft overhead clattered, spitting out a youth who landed right beside him.

"D... Dar? Why are you here? How did you get in?"

Daren giggled, "I came to save you! I finally found you, Papa Avery, let's leave quickly!"

Avery was gobsmacked. He was shocked when he saw Daren's charred left hand, "How did this happen?"

Daren waved his left hand, "I had no choice. Had to sacrifice my left

hand in order to escape. But it's ok! As long as papa Avery is around, this injury will heal very quickly."

Avery frowned, "First, let me treat you. Then you should leave quickly. It's too dangerous here."

"Papa Avery, are you not coming with me?" Daren started getting anxious.

"I....." Avery hesitated before spitting it out, "Sigh! I can't leave this place. I betrayed the both of you. Your brother will not let me off the hook. If I'm discovered after leaving this place, he will definitely kill me."

"No he won't!" Daren interrupted vociferously, "Gege promised he won't kill papa!"

Avery asked suspiciously, "Really?"

Will that Solaris Emperor really forgive those who had betrayed him?

In truth, Daren was not too confident about it. He could only bluster on, "I don't care. I will not let gege kill you!"

Avery knew then that Devon had not truly forgiven him. He quietened before saying, "Let me treat your wounds before we talk further."

"Orh." Daren nodded and obediently held out his left hand. Even if papa doesn't want to leave, I will knock him unconscious. Then I will let papa follow me around so that gege can't kill papa.

Avery was just about to use his diagnostic equipment on Daren when the electronic door started flashing. Someone was coming in.

"Dar! People....." He shouted anxiously.

Daren's reaction was even faster. In a flash, he had disappeared into a cabinet at the side.

Then Devon and Yue entered to take his life.....

"Devon fired at me but Dar dashed out to take the bullet instead. In the end Yue subdued Devon and coerced Dark Sun into killing me. He really made his move. I fainted and know nothing of what happened thereafter."

Avery shrugged as he lay on the bed. He knew that none of that information was of any help to finding the Solaris Emperor and Dar.

Everyone grew silent after listening to his account.

Kyle spoke mildly, "Young master Daren expertly avoided your heart. Or else you'd have died on the spot."

Avery snorted again, "I don't need you to tell me. I'm a doctor. Did you think that I would hate Dar for trying to kill me? Why don't you tell me how you managed to subjugate the entire Lunaris Alliance and yet remain unable to find those two people!"

At the mention of it, Kyle sounded resigned, "Solaris Emperor made arrangements and contacted all the spies in the Lunaris Alliance in advance. He also secretly made pacts with family members of the Lunaris Alliance to preserve and deliver the organisation in its entirety to Shain Baylian the instant Yue died, instead of allowing its subsidiaries to carve it up piecemeal."

"If so, then why hasn't Solaris Emperor been rescued?" Avery found it hard to believe.

"It's simple. Firstly, this entire fiasco was orchestrated solely by Yue with no consultation of other family members. In addition, he does not care about the survival of the Lunaris Alliance. After you fainted, he disappeared with the Solaris Emperor, young master Daren and four modified humans. We deduced that he departed via private jet and did not land at any airports. Hence, we're unable to trace their whereabouts."

Avery was flabbergasted. He knew that fellow was mentally unstable. To think that he was this crazy. What in the world is he trying to do? Abduct the Solaris Emperor to an uninhabited island for a couples retreat?

"He's utterly beserk." He concluded.

At that, Kyle paused his typing in complete agreement agreed with Avery's assessment. Solaris Emperor, even you would not be able to predict how a mad man will behave.

How am I supposed to bring both you and young master Daren back unharmed?

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c08 END \*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 9

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Yue Baylian indolently lay on the chaise, holding on to the television remote as he channel surfed.

“The global economic situation looks pretty normal. It seems like your fabled secretary Kyle really is competent. He could actually stabilise the situation even though the both of us are missing.”

Devon Solaris sat on another chair, leaning against the backrest in a relaxed position. A cup of his favourite black coffee sat on a coffee table at his side. Besides the shackles restraining his feet, the scene looked extremely normal. It was as if two friends were sitting in the lounge drinking tea and watching TV as they chatted.

“Of course,” he coldly replied. “How could I have chosen a second-rate secretary?”

“Uh huh! Maybe it would be alright even if you didn’t return?” A tinge of malice crept into the corner of Yue’s eye. “Since it seems as long as Kyle is there, it doesn’t matter whether the Solaris Emperor exists.”

Devon ignored him, despite the provocation. He proceeded to peruse a book laying nearby.

Seeing this, Yue's flirtatious smile suddenly went wild as he snatched and threw the book across the room. "You're not allowed to ignore me, Dev! You know what the consequences are!" he shouted.

Devon's expression changed as the thought of the consequences made his heart ache. Dar...

"Okay! What do you want to say?"

Yue revealed a victorious smile and went back to reclining on his chaise.

"Why do you trust Kyle so much?" he asked curiously. "Aren't you afraid that he will take this chance to betray you? For all you know, he might have already given up on the search for you."

Devon snorted. "Because he's sick."

Yue's expression soured suddenly. "It seems like the Solaris Emperor is not even willing to tell me a story!" he said, his voice cold.

Devon rolled his eyes. Annoyed, he replied, "I mean Bill has an extremely rare genetic disease."

"Oh?" Yue was momentarily stunned. He had not thought that was what Devon meant. He thought it was an excuse Devon invented to blow him off. He could not help but ask more. "Even if he has an illness, what does that have to do with his loyalty to you?"

"Every day he has to take medication to manage his illness. If he were to not take the medication his body would gradually calcify. Within a year, his body would be completely calcified, like a living statue. It is impossible for him to remain alive with that degree of calcification. In the final three months, when his organs begin to calcify, he will die."

Yue frowned unconsciously upon hearing about this fearful disease.

"Only I have the medicine he requires. Every six months, I give him half a year's worth of medication," Devon continued impassively.

"You're threatening him. If he doesn't stay your loyal secretarial dog, you won't give him medication?" Yue chuckled. "You're so ruthless, Dev!"

Devon harrumphed. "He has no right to complain. Just the research and development for the medication cost me billions. Even if he were to be a secretary for ten lifetimes he still wouldn't be able to repay me!"

"You put it that way, but it's not like you only invested in the medication for his sake, right?" Yue smiled. "If you were to put that kind of medicine on the market, how could you not recover the billions?"

"It's impossible to put it on the market," Devon said coldly. "This genetic disease is extremely rare. There are less than three incidences a year. In addition, the shelf life of this medication is a short six months. Coupled with an extremely complex manufacturing process, and ingredients that are difficult to source, the production costs of six months worth of medication is already around ten million. How many sufferers of this disease do you think could afford medication fees of twenty million per year? Therefore, even if I didn't monopolise the manufacturing of this

medication, Bill couldn't possibly afford it."

Yue did not know whether to laugh or cry. "So that's how it is. He is a secretary with a base value of billions, with an inflation rate of twenty million each year?"

Devon corrected him with a serious tone. "It's thirty million per year; I give him a salary as well."

"You're making me jealous! Back then, you didn't care about me nearly as much, even when you still saw me as Yuer!" A puzzled yet slightly suspicious look passed over Yue's face. "Why are you willing to invest billions on a secretary? I'm really curious, Dev," he asked.

Even though he was being forced into this conversation, Devon could not help but reminisce about the past. A bit annoyed, he began narrating.

"He was originally my personal secretary. I interviewed him myself. Initially I thought I had found a highly competent secretary, but then, afterwards, I realised that he was an agent sent by my father, from the very beginning. He even lied about his name being Bill."

So you know his name isn't Bill... Yue could not help but raise his eyebrows. He was rather surprised by this discovery.

"Maybe it was divine punishment. One day, he suddenly fell ill. As a swan song, he confessed that he had been sent by my father."

Devon grew silent. Not only Avery, but even Kyle had once been a traitor. He forgave Kyle back then because he had not yet ascended the throne as the Solaris Emperor and could still make decisions based on his likes and dislikes. Even if he were to make mistakes, his father would take care of it. However, he could no longer do that.

I have already risen to the pinnacle; all the consequences of my decisions must be borne by me. No one has the power to help me fix my mistakes anymore.

Therefore, Dar, Didi! Please understand and forgive me. Gege stands at the apex but I am not my own man. I did not mean to lie to you. I must kill your beloved Papa Avery not because I hate him, but to preserve the order and discipline required for the Solaris Federation's continued prosperity, and for your protection. Thus, this rule cannot be broken!

"I want to see my brother." Devon frowned. One thought of Dar and he became so worried that he needed to see him.

Yue raised his eyebrow. "Didn't you just see him this morning?"

"I want to see him now!" he shouted, furious. "He is my brother; even if I were to see him ten times a day it still wouldn't be enough."

Yue rolled his eyes. He could not stop himself from teasing. "Why don't you ask other people who have siblings: who else needs to see their brother at least ten times a day? They probably wouldn't even be bothered enough to take a glance."

Devon was silent. He finally raised his head and looked at Yue. "I'm worried about him," he beseeched.

"Ah! Only when we're talking about your brother do you show an expression other than your standard look of superiority and arrogance! Okay, okay, how could I possibly deny you, Dev?"

As Yue was speaking, his fingers inched towards a few particularly messy strands of Devon's hair. But Devon turned his head to the side and avoided them.

But Yue was not angered as he withdrew his hand. There are still many more chances for things like this. Being too hasty will only make my plans backfire.

"Let's go see Didi."

"He's my didi, not yours!" Devon barked. He hated it when others tried to encroach on his big brother status.

"Yes, yes, yes! To see your little brother, alright?"

Yue laughed coquettishly as he lead the way, while Devon followed behind. The two of them stepped out of the lounge into a corridor suspended in midair like a miniature suspension bridge. Devon stepped onto the bridge and peered below. Under his feet lay dense jungle vegetation. When he looked into the distance, he was completely surrounded by the sea. This place was truly a small island.

Yue had erected lodgings on three hills, connected by suspension bridges. The main residence was in the centre, flanked by one for the modified humans and the other for...

"We're here, Devon."

Devon shook himself, and immediately rushed inside the residence.

Dar...

It was as if he had entered an ancient mausoleum. The dome-shaped roof, walls and ceiling were decorated with exquisite frescoes. A gigantic crystal sarcophagus was placed in the centre surrounded by four 'tomb guards'. The only anomaly was the complex network of high-tech cables and tubing running beneath the sarcophagus.

Devon rushed straight to the transparent crystal sarcophagus, where he could clearly see the person laying within. It was a youth clothed like a young prince. Even his hands were covered with finely embroidered white gloves. His soft, shiny, closely cropped silver hair framed his face. His features were refined and elegant. It was a pity that his eyes were firmly closed, making it impossible to discern the beautiful colour of his eyes.

Although the scene looked dazzling at first glance, a closer look revealed the thick shackles securely binding the neck, waist, wrists, and ankles of the prince to the sarcophagus.

Devon heaved a sigh of relief after seeing that Daren was lying

untouched in the sarcophagus, the monitor indicating stable vital signs.

Even though he knew that he could not touch him, he still placed his hand on the lid as he stared at his beloved brother. At that moment, the lines on his face relaxed; there was not a hint of cold-blooded ruthlessness.

Yue greedily drank in the rare gentleness of the Solaris Emperor's face for a long minute before he was finally willing to speak. "So that powerful Dark Sun is actually this cute. No wonder you dote on him so much."

Devon snorted, "Of course. Dar is the cutest boy in the world. When he's sleeping he's cute, and when he's laughing he's even cuter. If he were to open his mouth and call out 'Gege' it would be so cute that you could melt."

Only you would melt away... Yue was between laughter and tears. If anyone were to hear these words, they definitely would not believe that this person was the cold-blooded and ruthless Solaris Emperor!

"Is Dar really all right?" Devon asked with a bit of unease. "When I fainted, wasn't he seriously injured?"

"You've asked a hundred times already! Relax! I have already allowed the modified humans to take care of his injuries before I placed your precious didi in this space hibernation capsule."

"You shouldn't have ordered the modified humans to attack him."

Devon's face darkened. Every time he thought about Dar getting beaten in front of him, his heart would ache and his limbs would tremble.

Yue already knew how to handle this man's brother complex by now. He quickly apologised in a gentle tone. "So-rry~! I won't ever hurt Didi again. Look, haven't I allowed him to wear these beautiful clothes and sleep in this beautiful place? It suits him well, right?"

"We'll stay here from now on. Your brother won't ever be hurt again. Isn't this for the best?"

Dar won't ever be hurt again... Devon placed his hand on the crystal lid, feeling torn.

Within the enormous office, there were two desks. The large black desk in the center of the room clearly belonged to the boss, but was unoccupied at the moment. The other desk was white and placed perpendicular to the other. This seat was not empty. Kyle was dressed in a crisp suit as he sat perfectly straight, working away with a solemn expression on his face.

Although someone was in the office, only the tap tap tap of extremely fast typing could be heard. The man's eyes were glued to the computer monitor. There were ten conversation windows and ten document files opened on the screen. It was a mystery how he managed to talk with so many people and handle all those files simultaneously.

In addition, the names of the conversation windows were rather unusual. There was Secretary 1, Secretary 2... All the way to Secretary 10... Kyle was addressed as the Head Secretary.

A minute later, the office that had been filled with only the sounds of typing was suddenly filled with music. It was coming from the small clock on the table. The clock was the shape of a cube and roughly the size of a fist. The surface was polished to a bright sheen, and was carved from a kind of black rock-like mineral.

Time to take some medicine.

Kyle pulled the clock towards him and pressed the ruby ornament on top. The clock opened up with a click, and dozens of green pills came into view. On closer inspection, a portrait on the clock face could be seen. The subject looked around twenty years old, his handsome features and arrogant expression captured vividly. His ruby eyes were even more beautiful than the real ruby ornament.

Kyle unconsciously let his mind wander. Solaris Emperor..

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"Here! Take this clock. Inside the device is the medication I spent all my savings on to research and develop. Take one pill every day and it'll keep you alive. You may have these in exchange for your loyalty. Bill, from now on you are my secretary. You belong to me, not my father. Do you hear me?"

"Yes, Young Master Devon. But my real name is Kyle."

"What? Who gives a damn? You should feel honoured that I can even

remember one of your names, and now you want me to remember a second one? Bill, hurry up and take your medicine!"

"Yes, Sir. Excuse me, but why does it have your portrait inside...?"

"Rubbish. Obviously, it's to remind you that I am your master."

"Pffft... Erhem! Yes, Young Master Devon, you are my master."

In the blink of an eye eight or nine years have passed since I became Solaris Emperor's secretary.

The man who once fought against his father relentlessly was now the Solaris Emperor. He had even found the little brother he loved so much. Kyle had thought that from that moment the Solaris Emperor could live a happy life with his brother.

Unfortunately, things are never as simple as they are in fairy tales. Problems had risen up one after another since Young Master Daren had returned. It was as if Daren was doomed from birth to be plagued with calamity.

Kyle stared at the portrait on the medicine case and sighed. "Solaris Emperor, when will you understand? Master Daren will never be an ordinary boy."

He picked up a pill and walked to the other side of the office to pour

himself a glass of water. Just as he swallowed the medication, the alert tone for new email went off on his computer. Usually, that was nothing special. He received dozens of emails each day. But this tone was the exact same tone as the alarm of the clock where he stored his medication.

That tone... it only sounded when one specific email account received mail, and only the Solaris Emperor and Master Daren knew the email address for that inbox!

Kyle returned to his desk immediately. He looked at the screen and exclaimed.

"This—this is..."

The name of the sender was actually...

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Daren... Eloise placed her head in her hands, staring at the man on the bed. Unable to help herself, she reached out a finger. Poke!

"When are you going to wake up? Don't you know both Dar and his brother have been captured? And yet you're still sleeping here without a care in the world! Unbelievable."

After seeing no reaction from the guy on the bed, Eloise tutted. "You should know, it was because of you that Dar couldn't wait to save his Papa and got himself captured!" she said even more unhappily.

"I really envy you. You're Dar's best friend, you know!" Eloise couldn't help herself and began complaining. "If I were in your situation one day, Dar definitely wouldn't try as hard to save me... I don't understand. Why does Dar like you so much? You don't even pay attention to him, unlike me and Elian—"

"Eloise!"

"Hm?" Eloise lifted her head and saw Elian and Eli run in. "Why so panicky? Don't tell me... Did something happen to Dar?" she asked a little suspiciously.

Elian was still catching his breath, but couldn't hold it in. "Found—found them," he gasped.

"What?" Eloise jumped up. "Really? Where are they?"

"Heard they were somewhere out in the ocean."

"The ocean?" Eloise looked confused. Could it be that they were swimming in the ocean?

After Elian finally recovered from his panting, he elaborated.

"Kyle the secretary said that the message was sent by Dar but the message doesn't locate them precisely. We only roughly know that it's somewhere at sea. But there are so many islands in that area of ocean,

and we can't be sure of their exact location. They're going to send three large submarines there, then use smaller boats to search the place inch-by-inch. He also agreed to let us go along."

"Wow!" Eloise bounced up and down in excitement. "Then I want to go as well! This time, I won't be left behind no matter what!"

"Sure. We weren't planning to keep you here, either," Elian nodded. "Also, I asked Sin to help out."

"What? Sin's going too?" Eloise yelled.

She finally noticed the androgynous person by the door, looking neither like a guy or girl... But, boy or girl, it didn't matter—Sin was dangerous. When he saw that Eloise had only just noticed him, Sin snorted resentfully.

"Modified humans are too strong. Without Sin it would be very difficult for just us few to win," Elian said a little impatiently. "Besides, we also have to protect the defenseless Mr. Avery."

"What? He's going as well? But he can't even fight!" Eloise protested, surprised.

Exactly! Elian sighed. It's not like a rescue mission at all! It's practically a field trip!

"But Mr. Avery said that the last time he saw Dar he was really badly injured, so he has to come along to make sure Dar's alright."

Eloise paled when she heard about Dar being hurt. "Then—then let's just bring him along anyways," she said. "If Dar is d-dying... then at least Papa Avery would be there to heal him."

Elian nodded. That was also why he didn't stop Avery from coming along. But he was still a burden with a bunch of medical equipment and absolutely no fighting skills. Elian had no choice but to beg for Sin's help, in case they couldn't save Dar and ended up falling into the hands of the enemy.

"Don't forget. If we rescue Dark Sun, you and he both owe me ten battles!" said Sin, voice cold.

"Of course." Elian smiled bitterly. Looks like the number of battles Dar owes is growing. I just hope he won't be too upset when he finds out that besides fighting me and Ezart, he also has to fight Sin.

"The smaller boats can hold ten people each. There's five of us, and Mr. Avery's medical equipment is quite bulky, so it will take up two seats. We also need people to carry the equipment, so he will be bringing two modified humans with him..."

Eloise rolled her eyes. "Basically, Papa Avery will be taking up five seats all by himself."

"There's still a seat left. Who are you planning to bring?" Eli asked offhandedly.

Elian nodded, thinking. "I don't have anyone else in mind. I was thinking of letting Secretary Kyle make the arrangements for us..." he said.

"Hey! I'm coming too!"

Everyone was stunned. That voice was...

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Daren Solaris opened his eyes, feeling very lucky. His message had been successfully sent to Kyle. Thankfully, there was still a connection left from when he hacked the internet so he could escape his cell at Baylian's base.

All that was left was working out how to escape this sarcophagus. Not only were there sedatives in the metal cuffs around his neck, wrists, and ankles, but Yue Baylian had also injected anesthetic gas to fill the capsule. Although he remained conscious, his limbs were weak, rendering him powerless against the metal cuffs.

Even if he could move his arms and legs, there were four modified humans standing outside. With his condition, there was no way he could win.

What to do...

Just when Daren was trying to figure out a way, he heard voices nearby. It must be Gege and Yue Baylian!

Everyday his gege would come visit him at least three times. Sometimes even ten. And every time Yue Baylian came too, complaining about his brother's persistence about coming to see him.

"Life has been so boring these days." That's Gege's voice.

"Dev, whatever it is that you need, I'll get it for you..."

"I want to touch Dar's face, pat his head, look into those eye which are dark as the night sky, and hear him call me Gege." Devon said dismally.

Gege...

Finally, after a long period of silence, Yue Baylian said just one word. "Fine."

Devon was speechless for a bit. He didn't expect Yue Baylian to really agree to his request. It wasn't until he saw Baylian work the controls for the sleeping capsule that he muttered, "Thank you."

Then, Daren heard the lid open, and felt a gentle hand caress his cheek then rub his head. These actions were more familiar than ever. Gege did this almost every day, normally. Although Daren really wanted to open his eyes, already moist with tears, and call out 'Gege', he kept his eyes shut. He couldn't let Baylian know that the sedatives weren't strong enough to render him unconscious. Otherwise, Baylian would definitely keep him captive in an environment even more difficult to escape than this one.

"He'll only wake up after the sedatives have worn off," Baylian explained

coldly.

"Hmm."

After waiting for what Daren thought was an appropriate length of time, he slowly opened his eyes, pretending to be confused. "Gege..." he called out with a hoarse voice.

Hearing his call, Devon's heart melted. "I'm right here." he whispered. "Don't be afraid. Everything will be alright."

Daren's eyes filled with tears when he heard those words. "I'm sorry, Gege, Dar should never have run away from home."

"No problem. What little brother wouldn't run away from home once in a while?" Devon gently wiped the tears off his brother's cheeks, consoling him.

...Don't little brothers usually not run away from home? Yue Baylian thought at the side, not sure whether to laugh or to cry.

"You just sleep well here, alright? Gege will come to visit you all the time."

Daren hesitated a little. Was Gege telling him not to take action? No! That way, he wouldn't be able to protect his brother!

"I don't want to be here alone!" he objected stubbornly.

At this, Devon frowned. He knew that opening the capsule was the most Baylian would allow. He couldn't ask for anything further. "Dar, listen to me..." he coaxed.

"Be a good boy, Didi." Smiling widely, Baylian looked down at Dar. He pointed to the modified humans around. "Look, didn't I let four big brothers stay here with you?"

Daren remained silent at those words. Even if he were to escape his confinement, he wouldn't be able to beat the four modified humans.

"Didi better not step out of this pretty crystal capsule! Or else these four big brothers will rip you into many little pieces!"

Hearing this, Daren began to worry even more. If he couldn't even leave the sarcophagus, then there was no way he was going to get Gege out of here.

"Don't scare him like that!" Devon barked unhappily.

"I'm sorry! But it's for his own good. I already gave the order. The moment he steps out of here..." Baylian's smile widened as he made a swift slicing motion across his neck.

Seeing the gesture, Devon clenched his fists in anger. He looked down at his brother and said in a voice that was almost begging, "Dar, please do this for Gege, be a good boy and wait in here for me to come see you, okay?"

Hearing Gege’s plea, Daren could only reply obediently, “Okay, Gege.”

Pained, Devon watched his brother get locked up again, paralysed. Had it not been for his helplessness in such circumstances, how could he let Dar lie in this coffin-like contraption?

Dar, I will definitely think of a way to get you out! I promise!

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“Elian, what island are we at now?” Eloise asked wearily.

“The sixth,” Elian replied impatiently.

Eloise wasn’t the only one feeling worn out; he was also feeling a little tired. Even though he knew they had to find Dar and Devon, it was just too hard. There were islands everywhere. Some were so small that only a single person could stand atop it. Others were large enough to almost be a country. Most of the islands were smaller, but even though they were considered small, they were all big enough to hide the headquarters. Therefore, every time they encountered one they would do a thorough search.

They’d already searched five islands and had been living in a submarine for almost a week, and there was still no sign of Dar. How could they not be worn out?

This sixth one would probably be another wasted effort.

"Stop wasting time. Just get on the island and look!" A pretty impatient voice came from the corner. He was hidden in the shade so he couldn't be seen very clearly.

Hearing that, Elian nodded and told the captain, "Dock and let us get off."

"Yes." The captain obeyed, stopped the submarine near the shore, and opened the top.

Elian stuck out his head to get a good look. This island wasn't small. There was lots of greenery and there seemed to be fresh water. He ducked back down and reported to the people below.

"Looks like the island can support habitation. Let's just get off and check it out. As usual, Mr. Avery, please stay by the beach with your modified humans. Wait for us to find Dar. We'll send you a message when we do."

Theodore nodded. That was a given. He didn't want his precious equipment exposed to the humid forest for too long.

"Tsk! Can I stay here, too? Just come tell me when you find Dark Sun." Sin laid lethargically on the chair.

"Of course not!" Elian shot him down. "If you want to have ten battles with Dark Sun, then get up and help."

"Tsk!" Sin tossed his head, and got up from his chair a little impatiently.

Everyone gathered their equipment and weapons, and one by one got out of the submarine. When Theodore was still busy ordering the modified humans to lay down his equipment, everyone else was already ready to go.

Suddenly, Theodore stopped the person who was walking behind everyone else.

"Wait! These past few days I have had some spare time, so I made you a set of weapons," he said. "It's made from the leftover materials from when I made Dar's scythe. Though it's not as good as his scythe, it's still a lot better than the average weapon. Take it!"

The person scratched his head, took the weapon, and without a word of gratitude he just hmped as a reply.

Surprised, Elian asked, "Mr. Avery, aren't you a doctor? How can you forge metals?"

"How many metal products do you think are in Dark Sun?" Theodore returned hotly. "Even his bones have metal in them. If I didn't study this field, Dark Sun would have been a lump of useless metal."

"Ah... you're right." Elian smiled, embarrassed. "Well, we'll go investigate now."

Theodore was busy ordering the modified humans to arrange the equipment correctly. In regards to what Elian said, he simply waved his hand, indicating that he had heard.

Elian looked at the environment around him. Besides the beach on the shore, the heart of the island was a densely-packed jungle. The island might not have been very big, but its topography was dynamic. At a glance, the mountains were tall and the valleys deep. They could barely see anything.

He couldn't help but sigh. Looked like it was going to take a while to do a thorough search. He could only hope it wasn't going to be another wasted effort.

Right when everyone was about to set out, Eli suddenly called out, "Wait."

"What's wrong?" Elian asked, surprised.

"Mr. Avery better come along," Eli said, looking at the mountainscape. "There's something off about this island."

Could it be...

"Is Dar here?" Eloise grabbed Eli's shoulder and shook him.

Eli didn't stop her, but all he did was shake his head. "I don't know, but there are definitely people on this island."

Elian pondered for a while, turned around and said, "Alright then, Mr. Avery, please come with us this time."

"Okay." Theodore nodded, gave instructions to the modified humans to carry the equipment, and followed the crowd.

The moment they knew there were people on this island, everyone's energy returned. Eloise even urged Elian, the leader, to walk faster. Even Theodore scolded the modified humans for walking too slowly. Right now everyone had only one thought in their minds, or, more accurately, one person...

Dar!

"There's nothing here! Eli, is there something wrong with your telepathy?" Eloise pinched Eli's cheeks and started pulling. After hours of searching, there was still no sign of Dar, and Eloise finally exploded.

Eli also looked confused. He completely ignored the stretching of his cheeks and simply looked up at the large vine above him. He pointed at it and said, "That's a little weird."

"The vine?" Elian looked up at the vine above his head. It just looks like a normal vine!

"It is a little strange." Theodore walked towards the vine, looked up at it. "Even for a tropical rainforest, the width of the vine is too large," he said. "The way it's grown is also a little odd. Look, the largest vines connect

each hill. They're practically suspension bridges."

After Theodore's explanation, everyone looked up and observed carefully. Although they couldn't see much due to the thick trees, they could still make out the large vines connecting each mountain. Also, there was something in common about those vines, the joins between them, and the hills: they were all obscured by large, thick trees.

Elian exclaimed, "It's a fortress in the sky!"

Theodore nodded, "Using the trees as cover, it can hide from helicopters above and search parties below. The vines are just disguises for suspension bridges. The only person who could organise such large-scale construction without being detected by the Solaris Emperor's secretary is Yue Baylian. Maybe this time we really found the right place."

Tsk. Sin rolled his eyes, looked up at the vines. "Don't tell me we're going to climb up there," he muttered. "I never thought that in order to fight Dark Sun I had to be a monkey first!"

Elian nodded and said prudently, "Then, should we go back to the submarine and notify Secretary Kyle..."

Ka-BOOOOoom!

The sound of an explosion cut him off. Everyone stared blankly at the one of the hills, where the noise had come from. All the trees in that area were destroyed, revealing a dome beneath it. A big part of the dome, too, was destroyed, engulfed in flames.

Dar!

"Ugh!" Eli fell to his knees and grabbed his head, his face white as a sheet.

"Eli?" Elian, the first to notice Eli's odd behavior, asked with concern.

Eli lifted his pale face and pointed to of of the other connected hills. "There. I heard the thoughts of the Solaris Emperor. He's calling out Dar's name, desperately. Louder than the explosion just now..."

At this, Elian froze. After the explosion the Solaris Emperor started calling out Dar's name in grief? Could it be...

He lifted his head, looked over at the dome, an unpleasant look on his face. "Quick! Let's hurry over there. Dar's probably in there!" he barked.

What? "Wait!" Theodore stopped the anxious crowd.

"Someone needs to go to the Solaris Emperor. With something like this happening so suddenly, the people looking after the Solaris Emperor will be distracted. Someone needs to go over there and save him.

"Eloise. And you, you have a lot of strength. Carry my equipment and come with me to save Dar. Elian, take Eli, who can read minds, Sin, and my two modified humans to save the Solaris Emperor. Try to keep hidden and stay on your toes. Don't take on Yue Baylian. He's skilled in the

martial arts, and if he has the Solaris Emperor you'll be helpless.

"Use the communicator to stay in touch." Avery added. "Notify us immediately when there's any change in the situation. As soon as everything with Dar is worked out, I'll send these two to go help you."

"Got it." Elian nodded and gathered Eli and Sin, followed by the two modified humans. The party sprinted in the direction Eli had pointed.

"You'll come with me..."

Before he could finish his sentence, he was tossed over someone's shoulder. He carried Theodore in one arm and carried a black box in the other. He then turned to Eloise and said, "You carry those."

Eloise's sparkling eyes were fixed on Theodore. She half-whiningly begged, "Can we switch? I'll carry Papa Avery. You can carry the equipment!"

Before the guy could reply, Theodore lifted his head coldly and said, "I refuse to trade!"

Eloise puffed out her cheeks and grudgingly picked up the equipment.

"Let's go!"

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c09 END\*\*\*\*\*



# Volume 3 Chapter 10

Translator: Fly, Yihn

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"Dar... Dar..." Devon cried out. His heart ached as though it were breaking.

Turning around, he glared at Yue Baylian with his bloodshot eyes and bellowed, "What exactly have you done to Dar? All you wanted was to see me suffer in pain, wasn't it? You didn't really kill him, did you?"

"I..."

Yue Baylian could no longer grasp the situation. He had originally thought that the mastermind behind the explosion was Devon. However, the Solaris Emperor had practically fainted in fright when he realised the explosion came from the Dome which housed his little brother. That was followed by a heartbreaking cry for his brother. It was impossible for him to feign that. Impossible!

"Dar! Dar..."

Devon stumbled towards the Dome, the place where Daren had been.

Yue Baylian hastily pulled him back. "What are you doing? The drawbridge has already been destroyed in the explosion. It is impossible for you to cross!"

“Don’t hold me back. I am going to look for Dar!” Devon flailed wildly in an attempt to escape Yue Baylian’s grip. His strength was so great that even Yue, who had been trained in martial arts for years, almost failed to keep his grip. In desperation, he knocked Devon unconscious with a blow to the back of the head using the hilt of his knife.

Yue laid Devon down on the couch before turning to face what was left of the Dome. “Dark Sun, what exactly are you up to?” he muttered in bewilderment. “But even if you did manage to survive the explosion you would have lost your mobility. Not to mention the fact that you were already seriously wounded beforehand.”

Yet he was unable to relax just yet. Dark Sun was definitely behind the explosion. Although he was unclear on the other’s motives, he was sure that Dark Sun would not leave Devon in the lurch and escape by himself. Therefore, all he needed to do was to stand guard at Devon’s side.

After ordering the cyborgs to keep a watch on their surroundings, Yue slowly lowered himself onto the couch. He looked down at Devon who was still unconscious, reaching out to caress his silky blonde hair. Entranced, he whispered, “Dev, I will never let you go. Never.”

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“Dev, never let you go... never..”

Eli leapt up onto a thick tree branch murmuring what he had just overheard, a confused look on his face.

Sin stared at him, unsure what was going on.

A faint, ambiguous smile grew on Elian's face. "... Seems like the Solaris Emperor and Yue Baylian are inside, alright. Is anyone else there?"

Eli shook his head. "I didn't hear anyone else. But there might be cyborgs around. I can't hear a cyborg's innermost thoughts."

"Is that so?"

Elian was pretty vexed. According to Avery, Yue Baylian was extremely skilled in the martial arts. If they had to face him and a hoard of cyborgs, it would be impossible for a surprise attack to succeed. The Solaris Emperor might even be harmed in the process if things did not go according to plan, landing them in more trouble than they could handle.

"All we can do now is to wait for an opportunity. Eli, pay utmost attention to the situation inside. The moment an opportunity appears, we will immediately..."

"Hey—" Sin abruptly voiced in warning.

Before he could finish his sentence, something crashed through one of the windows. A humanoid object shot out of it, narrowly avoiding them, and fell down below, breaking numerous branches along the way and sending leaves flying into the air.

The trio stared at the hole in the glass created by the figure, speechless. Elian glanced at Eli, and a seldom shown awkward expression grew on the latter's face.

"It isn't that I didn't hear him! It must be one of those emotionless cyborgs. If not, then it must have been Dark Sun's doing."

Elian sighed. "I miss the old days when only humans would commit murder," he lamented.

Just then, a bellow came from within the building. "Dark Sun! I will never let you take Dev away!"

It was Dar!

Elian was about to call on Eli and Sin to go give Dar a hand when Eli cried out. "Elian!" He pointed to the right.

Elian's gaze followed the direction of his finger and he noticed a group of cyborgs running towards the Central Building. He could not help but gasp at the sight. Making a prompt decision, he barked, "Get to the drawbridge. We will make use of the narrow space to block their way."

The three of them, together with the two accompanying cyborgs, immediately leapt onto the drawbridge, cordoning off the bridge deck. Elian made use of the time before the cyborgs reached them to take a glance in the direction of the Central Building. He almost cried out in alarm at the sight that met his eyes. Dark Sun, heavily scarred and seriously wounded, stood before Yue Baylian, blocking his path. Devon

Solaris lay unconscious on the couch behind him.

Although Elian wanted to aid Dar, he also knew how important it was to keep the approaching cyborgs out of the Central Building. It would be the end for all of them if that happened.

"Be sure to defend well, Sin, Eli."

"Do you need to say that?" Sin snapped, starting to feel that ten battles as his compensation was far too few.

In the Central Building, Daren continued eluding Yue Baylian and the cyborgs' attacks, breathless. Yet Baylian's whip was like a deceitful viper, continuously pressing in on him. And, with numerous cyborgs lurking around ready to attack, he had no choice but to merely dodge. Even though his chip had deduced that he could gain the offensive via a retreat, he could not do so without leaving the couch open to the enemies' attack.

"I didn't expect you to be able to escape, given the circumstances." A tender smile grew on Yue Baylian's lips. "What exactly can you do in your current state?"

Indeed, he had been caught off guard by Dark Sun's sudden attack that forced him to leave Devon's side. However, when he calmed down and took a closer look at the situation, he saw that Dark Sun was covered in injuries. Although the arm that had been dislocated before had been popped back into place, the angle was still wrong. That probably explained why Dark Sun had yet to start attacking with his hands and had only dodged up to this point.

"Cyborgs, attack the person lying on the couch!" Yue Baylian ordered disdainfully.

The moment the order was given, the cyborgs' weapons changed direction, slashing toward the unconscious Devon. All Daren could do was abruptly turn back to shield and protect his brother. At that moment, Yue Baylian's whip coiled around his ankle and with a tug he laid sprawled on the ground.

"Stop! Now suppress the enemy on the ground."

All the weapons closing in on Devon stopped immediately, only inches from his head, and whirled back towards Daren instead.

Held down by the cyborgs, Daren was devastated. I'm sorry, Gege, Dar has failed to rescue you.

"You sure are mischievous." Taking a few steps forward, Yue nudged Daren's head with his foot. "Look at you. I wonder how your brother's heart would ache if he were to see you in your current state? This usually adorable face is in such a filthy state.

"However..." Sneering, Yue calmly turned his attention to the trio, who were still in combat with a group of cyborgs outside. "The three of you outside! If you don't stop I'm afraid that Dark Sun's head and body will be going separate ways!" he shouted.

Elian and the others stiffened for a moment, but kept fighting. Even

though they wanted to do as Yue Baylian ordered, the cyborgs were not showing any signs of stopping! How were they supposed to stop in this situation?

Of course, Yue knew the dilemma they were facing. He just did not bother ordering the cyborgs to stop. He enjoyed making things difficult for others.

"Still not stopping? Then I guess I will..." with a vicious smile, Yue's whip rained down harshly on Daren's back.

When the first lick of the whip slashed his back Daren gave a stifled cry, but that was the only sound he made. As the whipping continued, he remained silent, even when the force of the whips increased. Enraged, Yue Baylian increased the speed and strength of his blows. "How dare you disregard my presence!"

Panic overwhelmed Elian as he heard the constant lashes of the whip. Worried, he turned around, hoping to take a look at Daren's situation.

"You want to die?!" Sin bellowed as he blocked a blade meant for Elian. The blade would have beheaded him if he hadn't.

Although Elian glimpsed the terrible scene of Daren being beaten, he couldn't help but murmur the words "Amazing. He is here..."

Just then a gigantic fist swung at the side of Yue Baylian's face. Yue noticed it at the last moment, and barely managed to dodge. Though he did manage to avoid its direct attack, a tiny cut on his cheek was left by

its wake.

"Who are you?" Yue Baylian turned around in astonishment.

The man pounded his fists together, the metal wrapped around them giving a deafening clang. He roared as he fists collided. "Haha! I am your father!" he sneered.

Yue Baylian fumed upon hearing this. Brandishing his whip, he lunged into battle with the man.

Meanwhile, a cyborg was sent flying with a punch from Eloise as she joined the drawbridge fight with the remaining cyborgs. Daren stared at the new arrivals blankly. "E—Ezart! You've woken up?" he called out in disbelief.

Ezart did not stop his fists, even as he heard his friend's call. Instead, he rolled his eyes at Daren and snapped, "Idiot! How did you end up looking like a piece of charcoal?"

"You... you really are finally awake." Daren's eyes filled with tears, almost brimming over.

"No shit!" Ezhart snapped. "If I weren't awake, does that mean I'm sleepwalking right now?"

"I—I..." Daren no longer had the ability to reply. The last of his energy drained away as he lay on the ground. His body was already well past its limits, being heavily wounded. Yet he had continuously forced himself to

do many dangerous things. First it had been using of his last bit of energy to cut open the capsule. Then he threw the bomb imbedded in his body out of the capsule on the sly, in an attempt to destroy the four cyborgs standing guard outside with the explosion.

Despite having the capsule to protect him and minimise his own damage, it was inevitable that he suffered injuries from the explosion, adding to his already battered body.

Following that, he had used the moment when Yue Baylian was distracted by Devon to smash a window and throw a cyborg out as well. Then had come the battle with Yue Baylian and the remaining four cyborgs.

Numerous wounds covered his body. More than 25% was covered in burns from the explosion, which was why Ezart had compared him to a piece of charcoal.

"Dar, sit still and don't move. I will heal you."

This voice is... Stunned for a second, Daren blurted out, "Papa Avery!"

"Mm-hm," Avery acknowledged, inspecting his injuries with a grave look on his face. The muscles on his left arm were thoroughly destroyed. His right elbow joint was slightly crooked, as if it had been dislocated but then forced back into position. There were no fractures in his leg but it was covered in bruises and lacerations.

"Luckily there are no broken bones. You would have been in real trouble

then.”

Avery grabbed hold of Daren’s right hand, placing it into a cylindrical apparatus. “I will first help you to adjust the angle of the bone, and then spray some hemostatic agent on it. We will leave the rest till when we return to the laboratory.”

“Okay, but please don’t apply any anesthetics,” Daren hastened to say. “If you do, I won’t be able to move my right hand.”

“Then you will have to bear with the pain.” Avery nodded, pushing a few buttons on the apparatus.

Leaving it to work on its own, he picked up the hemostatic agent and began looking for wounds on Daren Solaris’s body to spray. It was then that he realised he could not find an inch of skin that was unwounded. In the end, he simply sprayed Daren from head to toe, covering him entirely with the agent.

To one side, the battle was still going on. “I will be your opponent!” Ezhart bellowed, waving his fists. He charged at Yue Baylian. The latter, having noticed that his strength was overwhelming, knew that he would take serious internal damage if he were hit with one of those fists. Thus he took a defensive approach, trying to dodge most of the time.

Yue Baylian’s moves were far more agile and extraordinary when compared with Shain Baylian. However, Ezart was no longer the Ezart of the past, either. His speed had increased and his punches were infinitely more powerful. Often, his fists merely grazed past Yue Baylian. Yet, it was enough for the air rushing in its wake to cut his robes, which were now in

shreds. Each punch was like a mighty tornado.

"Ezart has become so strong!" marvelled Dar. He fixed his gaze on the duel as Avery patched him up.

Avery busied himself with tending to Daren. "I heard he survived drinking my concoction. That guy's definitely hardy. Even though my compound is capable of stimulating a human's potential, greatly enhancing its power and speed... in all the test cases I've carried out, the test subjects died not long after consuming it."

By this time, Elian, Sin, Eli and Avery's pair of cyborgs had already eliminated all the enemy cyborgs outside and immediately turned back to help Eloise with the rest.

"Damn it!"

Realizing that the tide was no longer in his favour, Yue Baylian shattered the window at his side with a flying kick, jumping through the hole and fleeing. Ezart followed quickly behind, shouting for him to stop.

Elian, worried that Ezart could not beat Yue Baylian, hurriedly said to Sin, "Could you catch up to them and help Ezart neutralise the enemy before bringing him back?"

Sin rolled his eyes. "This is the last order, right?" he asked.

"That's right. This would be the last one." Elian nodded.

Satisfied, Sin bobbed his head and dashed away in the direction Yue Baylian and Ezart had last been seen.

"Dar, are you alright?" asked Elian in concern.

"My cute Dar, you were actually tortured to such..." Eloise broke off with a sob. "This is so awful!" The sight of Daren's covered with burns pained her greatly.

"Eloise, I'm alright." Daren assured Eloise, jumping to his feet.

With that one jump, the bandages that were only still half wrapped around his chest began to unravel, prompting Avery to roll his eyes. But never mind! Most of the bleeding had stopped, and the rest of the boy's injuries could be looked at when they were back at the lab.

"It's fine as long as you're alright." Elian smiled in relief. Although Daren's appearance was a ghastly sight, seeing that he could already jump around so enthusiastically to console her, and without the least bit of worry from Avery, reassured her that it couldn't be that serious.

At this time, Devon, who had been lying on the couch, slowly opened his eyes. Sitting up, he immediately caught a glimpse of Dar smiling and conversing with Elian and the others. His heart, which had felt unbearably constricted, finally relaxed. He let out a big whoosh of breath and his mind was filled only by the thought 'Dar is alive'.

"Avery..."

Devon abruptly caught sight of Avery and his eyes turned hard and ruthless. He would never allow anyone who endangered Dar to live. He never, ever again wanted to feel the heartbreaking pain of his Didi almost dying. He walked over to a drawer in the study, unnoticed, where he knew Yue kept his handgun. Taking out the silver BHP09, he took aim at Avery.

"This is for Dar. Die," he sneered.

BAM!

"Don't, Gege!"

With a shout, Daren dove in front of Avery and took the bullet in his arm.

"No...!" Devon gasped as he watched it happen. A shock of cold wind seemed to freeze his heart, and the gun clattered to the floor. He'd hurt Dar, he had actually hurt Dar...

But Daren, who felt his anger rising, didn't care about the bullet hole in his arm. "Gege, why must you kill Papa Avery?!" he yelled.

Smack!

Devon slapped his brother fiercely across the face. Daren touched his cheek with a lost look on his face. Gege... actually slapped me?

"I only wanted to protect you!" Devon bellowed. "Do you know how much I have sacrificed up to now just to protect you? And yet you—you continuously let yourself to get hurt and refuse to take care of yourself in the slightest!"

Daren looked blankly at his brother. But—but he got injured because he also wanted to protect Gege...

"Why can't you be obedient and just listen to me? Just stay under my protection and be an ordinary, obedient teenage boy?"

Devon woefully fell to his knees after voicing his pent-up emotions, and buried his face in his hands. He was tired. How many times had he been injured, from the day he rescued his brother until now? Why is it that even though he's under my wing, he still gets hurt?

This time, it was even he himself who opened fire and wounded Dar!

"Gege..." Daren called out timidly, looking at him with the same dumbfounded expression.

"I—I promise to be good from now on. Can you let Papa Avery live?"

Devon had actually started to cave a little when he heard Dar's voice, but his subsequent request made him explode, and he couldn't help but rave at his brother.

"No! He has too much influence over you. He doesn't truly care about you and could betray you anytime, anywhere. By keeping him by your

side you are just waiting for him to betray you again and break your heart."

Avery ducked behind Elian and Eloise, the three of them frozen awkwardly, unsure whether to intervene in the brothers' quarrel.

Daren started panicking as he realised his brother was so determined. "Gege, Dar will be good!" he pleaded. "Can you please not kill Papa Avery?"

Devon nearly gave in, but his wits pulled him back at the last moment. If he didn't kill that traitor Avery how could he keep everyone on their guard? If Avery were spared, and should he betray them once again, Dar would definitely be heartbroken again!

He wanted to reject his brother's request, but on second thought Avery's experiments were full of danger after all. Who knows if one day he might just die in the lab, right?

"Very well. I'm not going to kill Avery okay, Dar?" placated Devon with a smile.

Daren, however, did not relax immediately, but instead he stared with huge unblinking eyes at his brother, making the latter feel a shiver of uneasiness pass through him.

Elia and the others at the side glanced askance at Devon. Even they did not believe that Devon would truly let Avery off the hook.

"Gege, you're lying to me again, aren't you?"

Having been found out, as expected, Devon smiled bitterly.

"Gege always lies." Daren hung his head.

"What? I didn't..." Devon stared. If it weren't due to these circumstances, how could he have lied to Dar?

"Gege said that he would protect me when Father was taking me away, but Dar waited for so long and Gege never came! At that time, only—only Papa Avery would smile at me. I don't want Papa Avery to die, but no matter what I say, Gege still wants to kill Papa Avery."

This... Devon was completely unable to refute his brother and could only direct his anger at Avery.

"It's all because of you! Why did you betray us?!"

"If I didn't help Yue Baylian modify humans, would I still be alive right now?" Avery replied coldly. "Moreover, I thought that with your protection there would be no chance of Dar getting hurt by them. So I agreed to his request without hesitation. How was I to know you would let Daren leave the house during that time?"

"I..." Devon was speechless. That was definitely his fault. It was because Dar had realised that Devon was never going to rescue Avery or would more likely have killed him. That was why Dar had left the house. Thus if he had genuinely promised that he wouldn't kill Avery at that time, Dar

would never have run away.

Avery was silent for a moment, before speaking in an indifferent tone. "You and your brother—one has the protection of your Gege, and one has the protection of your Didi. While I have only myself. I only wished to live; was that wrong?"

"Papa Avery..." Daren called out hesitantly.

Avery turned to look at Daren and sighed. "Dar, look at our past together. Could you stall your brother for a minute or two while I leave? After this you should stop caring about me, too. And, please, don't ever run away from home again."

"Wait! Don't go, Papa Avery!" Shocked, Daren cried out. "Don't go! I'll persuade Gege to spare you."

"No..." Avery smiled bitterly. He did not think that Devon would ever forgive him, should he continue staying with the Solaris family. Someday he could easily drop dead without even knowing why.

"Gege..." pleaded Daren as he turned around to look at Devon.

Devon's face was stiff as he thought things through. If he were to refuse Dar's request, then wouldn't he be going back on his word about giving Dar anything he wanted? But if he let Avery off, what would become of Dar's safety, and the punishment for a traitor?

A sudden wretched shout came from the door just as he was going

through this dilemma. "Devon!"

He turned to the direction of the voice, and stood stunned for a few moments. "Baylian..." he mumbled.

Yue Baylian was holding up a pistol, aimed at Devon. Without a care that half of his body was covered in wounds, he shouted hysterically, "if I can't have you, I'll just kill you! Kill you!"

Devon's expression darkened but just as he was about to give a cold reply, he saw Yue's pleading gaze, without the slightest murderous intent, and a tear silently sliding down his cheek...

If he really wanted to kill me, why hasn't he fired?

Since the beginning, Yue Baylian had many opportunities to kill him. However, he had never hit him, not even had he once raised his whip against him.

... How could I hit you when you look at me with a smile on your pretty face?

Devon suddenly understood. No matter what, Yue Baylian would never harm him. Even if he was pointing a gun at him, all he asking for was to be noticed.

He sighed. "It's okay; put down your gun. From this day onward, you shall stay by my side and be my secretary, like Bill," he said.

Yue was shocked when he heard those words. How was this possible? Normally, Devon would kill any traitors, not to mention enemies.

Seeing the disbelief in his face, Devon added, "I swear to you, on the name of the Solaris Emperor, I am not going to kill you."

I'm serious about letting Yue Baylian go, thought Devon. Since he couldn't kill Avery, who had an even more likely chance of betraying him, what reason could he have to justify killing Yue Baylian, who would never in the slightest chance betray him?

"Dev..."

Yue Baylian could hardly believe he was hearing those words, and the pistol in his hand slowly lowered without him realising.

Devon nodded, smiling, as he looked at Yue Baylian, making the latter feel like was in a dream.

"Hahahaha!"

Since he had decided on making him his secretary, naturally, he should treat him better so that he would work hard for him like Bill. After all, Yue Baylian had controlled Lunaris Alliance for so long: without doubt, he was most certainly incredibly talented!

He was a little worried that Bill would collapse due to over-exerting

himself, with there being no one to help him with his huge workload.

"Dev..."

Yue's gun clattered to the floor, with tears streaming down his face. He was unable to believe that things had come to this. He could actually still have Devon's forgiveness and attention, and even stay by Devon's side in the future...

"Dar, stop it..." hollered Avery suddenly, but everything happened so fast. Daren picked up the silver BHP09 that was on the floor in a fluid motion and Yue Baylian's body swayed as a gunshot rang out.

"D—Dev, you lied..." he muttered mournfully.

But as he turned to face Devon, he saw the dazed look on his face. It seemed he could not truly comprehend what had just happened.

Seeing this, Yue Baylian smiled lightly. "It seems that it wasn't you who wanted to kill me! However, even if you really did, I won't resent you one bit because at the very least, you would still have that dismayed expression..."

A stream of blood dripped down his temple. Soon after, his eyes closed shut and his body slowly tumbled to the ground. All movement ceased.

With not a hint of emotion in his eyes, Daren walked towards him and stopped a few feet away. He lifted his gun, intending to pump a few more bullets into the body to ensure that he was really dead.

"Dar, what are you doing?!" Devon jolted out of his daze. Rushing over to his brother's side, he knocked the BHP09 out of his hand with one hit.

Stunned for a second, an innocent look replaced Daren's expressionless face. He replied timidly, "I—I am protecting Gege!"

"Didn't I promise Yue Baylian I wouldn't kill him?" Devon bellowed furiously. "Why did you still kill him? Do you really like bloodshed this much?"

Daren knew he had made a grave mistake. Eyes wide, he tried to explain in a flurry. "B-but... Gege also promised you wouldn't kill Papa Avery, but that was a lie. I thought—thought that you were just lying to Yue Baylian to make him put the gun down..."

He faltered, tears rolling down his face as he shook his head. "I don't know! I don't know when Gege is speaking the truth or telling a lie. I don't know!"

With that, he turned and ran towards the door.

Devon's expression stiffened. "Dar come back here!" he bellowed.

Hearing his brother's yell, Daren paused briefly before he continued bolting out the door.

Witnessing a repeat of Dar's defiance and the fact that he had just run

away from him again, Devon stood rooted to the ground, dumbfounded. Only after Daren was out of sight did he wake up from the daze. Taking a few urgent steps towards the exit, he stumbled over Yue Baylian's body. Halting abruptly, he stared blankly at the body lying motionless on the floor.

He tried to kill Avery to protect Dar, and Dar had killed Yue Baylian to protect him.

"I only wanted to protect you, Dar, just like how you wanted to protect me."

Devon broke out in peals of maniacal laughter. They were brothers indeed! So much so that their motives and actions seemed to completely mirror each other. All they wanted was to protect each other. To protect each other...

"Hahaha... But—but why do we end up hurting each other? Why? Ha! Isn't this ironic? Ahahaha..." His laughter took on a gut-wrenching tone.

...Dar!

"Solaris Emperor..." Elian called out hesitantly.

Hearing him, Devon dried his eyes. How can a ruler cry?

Even if the world were to collapse, a ruler could only face it with a smile. Even if his laughter sounded like cries of despair.

Avery slowly made his way to Devon's side. He hesitated for a moment, looking at the door Daren had left through, but did not give chase. Instead, he unclipped the radio intercom attached to his waist and spoke into it.

"Ezart, Dar ran off. Something's not quite right about him. Follow after him and take a look."

\*\*\*\*\*

"Dar!"

Ezart chased after Daren. Luckily, he had not used his full speed while running away. It would have been impossible for Ezart to catch up with him otherwise.

Hearing Ezart's shout, Daren stumbled a few steps and finally came to a stop.

"Dar, why are you running away?" Ezart snapped at him the moment he caught up.

"Ezart..."

Daren turned to face him, eyes brimming with tears. His voice quivered. "Is Dar Devil's spawn?"

"Huh?" Ezart stared blankly at him. What nonsense is this? Why are all his questions ridiculously bizarre? Before it was about his looks, and now it's this 'devil' situation. It's impossible to figure out this kid's thought process.

"Why? Mother died. So did Father. Ezart, you almost died, too. Then it was Papa Avery, and Dar almost caused Gege's death. Now, I killed someone whom Gege didn't want dead..." Daren continued absentmindedly. "Will everyone involved with me die?"

"What are you talking about? I didn't die! Your Papa Avery didn't die. And your brother is alive enough to quarrel with you!" Ezart snapped. "Also, it was my own carelessness that almost led to my early departure. What has that got to do with you?"

However, Daren seemed to have drifted off into thought. As though he had not heard anything Ezart had said, he continued. "Gege wanted to kill Papa Avery because he was a traitor... but Papa Avery was just trying to survive. Gege was not in the wrong, but neither was Papa. So whose fault was it?"

"...How would I know?" Ezart scratched his cheek. He hadn't been able to make heads or tails of the situation since the beginning. All he knew was that Dar and his brother had both been captured, and he had come to rescue them.

"It's my fault!" Daren muttered to himself. Yes. Obviously I am at fault. If it wasn't for me, how could Mother have died like she did? If I had never been born, Gege would never have hurt the father who loved him dearly, right?

Back then, if I had followed the microchip's judgement and had not insisted on meeting the Principal, Papa Avery would not have delivered the Scythe. He would not have then been captured in the process. If I hadn't run away from home and been captured by Yue Baylian, Gege would not have been captured.

It was my fault. All my fault...

Ezart furrowed his brows. Something wrong is going on with this guy. He shook Daren's shoulders, trying to get his attention. "Dar?"

Would it be better if I had never existed? Was it just like what father had said? Bad luck will fall upon whomever comes into contact with the Devil's spawn?

"That is why I will seal the Devil's spawn within Dark Sun's body. Only then will you not hurt your brother, my beloved child, my great Sun King."

"Dar, what's the point of thinking so much? Let's go back to your brother and Elian first." Ezart patted Daren's shoulder vigorously.

Go back... Dazed for a second, Daren recalled that his brother did call out to him when he dashed out.

Master's order is to go back.

No! I don't want... I don't want to go back. Gege said that I can do

whatever I want to do. If I were to return, I would end up hurting him... But it was Gege who cried out for me to come back. But he refused to forgive Papa Avery. Which command am I supposed to follow?

I have no idea...

Master's order must not be defied!

"Dar?"

Daren Solaris stood rooted to the ground, his body trembling. Watching him, Ezart frowned.

"Hey! What's wrong with you? It's just a quarrel with your brother. Just apologise and everything will be fine. It's not like the Solaris Emperor will eat you or something. Is there any need to tremble in fear?"

Return to Master's side; Master ordered you to return. Obey the order..

But Dar is the Devil's spawn. If I return, sooner or later Gege will be hurt.

"... I will seal you, the Devil's spawn, within Dark Sun's body..."

Nobody will get hurt as long as I am sealed?

Daren's body stopped trembling abruptly. The emotions faded from his eyes, his face gradually becoming expressionless.

"Dar?"

Ezart felt increasingly uneasy as he looked at him. He felt something untoward had happened the moment Daren stopped trembling. Something is definitely wrong with this kid!

He forcefully whirled Daren around to face him, but Daren pushed his hands away immediately.

Ezart was taken aback for a moment before he suddenly noticed Daren's cold gaze.

...No, this isn't Dar!

"Dark Sun?!" he gasped in alarm. Why did Dark Sun resurface suddenly?

"Master's order were to go back," Dark Sun replied monotonously, tilting his head slightly, stiff as a robot.

"Dar? What are you up to?" Ezart stared at him.

"Return and protect Master. Return, protect..."

Repeating the words over and over again like a broken record, Dark Sun mechanically staggered past Ezart's side, as though he was not in complete control of his limbs.

Ezart pulled him back by the arm. Even a blind man could tell that something was wrong with him. Dark Sun's entire body unexpectedly collapsed backwards. Caught off guard, Ezart managed to grab hold of him just inches from the ground.

"Dar?"

Re-adjusting his grip, Ezart slowly lowered Daren's 90 kilogram body onto the ground. It was only then he managed to take a good look at him.

Daren's eyes were shut firmly, his brows furrowed as his body twitched intermittently.

"What the hell is going on?" Ezart stared, completely flabbergasted.

Gradually, Daren calmed down, and the twitching abated. Yet, his eyes remained closed.

"Dar?" Ezart shook him, but he remained unresponsive. He muttered under his breath, "This is bad! Don't tell me he's carked it?"

He swept Daren up into his arms. Although Dar was not a light load, it was still manageable with his current strength.

Ezart strode back in the direction of Devon's room. He had just reached the doorway when he saw Devon still sitting with his face buried in his

palms. Avery was fiddling with the corpse at the door and Elian seemed at a loss about what to do.

"Hey! Dar's brother and father! Something's not quite right with him," Ezart shouted.

"What's wrong with Dar?" Devon covertly rearranged his expression as he quickly stood up. He hastened towards Ezart, a scowl appearing on his face as he looked at Daren who was lying in Ezart's arms. Yet, before he could reach them, Daren opened his eyes.

"He has woken up," Devon sighed with relief.

Ezart stared down at the person in his arms. Vaguely, he could tell that something was not right. Was Dar's expression always this cold? Is it because he's angry?

No! This isn't Dar! No matter how I look at him, he is lacking his characteristic innocent foolishness. Even when Daren was angry, he could not conceal the natural sense of nerdiness which oozed out of him. With only a couple more glances, Ezart said assuredly, "You are Dark Sun."

Daren—or, rather, Dark Sun—leapt out of Ezart's arms and landed on the floor, agile as a cat. He then walked behind his master and stood at attention.

"Dar?" Ezart and Devon called out simultaneously.

Just then, Avery, who was squatting next to the corpse, still fiddling

with it, looked up and frowned as he surveyed Daren.

"What is going on?" Devon promptly spun around, anxiously grabbing his brother's shoulders as he tried to catch the faintest hint of a human expression on his face. Even if it was a tearful expression.

Dark Sun, hearing Master's question, started an introspection and reported. "Body is partially damaged. Repairs recommended, no abnormalities observed on the chip."

Hearing his answer, Devon was utterly stunned.

Avery moved closer. "Tell him to switch on his emotions," he suggested.

"Yes, that's right. Is the emotion switch turned off? I order you to switch it on! Do you hear me? Switch it on immediately!"

"Yes, Master."

Silent for a while, a series of programs flashed through his eyes. "Reporting: Emotion switch cannot be turned on." he finally stated. "As Daren Solaris' emotions were obstructing him from obeying Master's orders earlier, he decided to switch it off of his own accord and refuses to switch it back on. Override failed."

Devon was shaken. What is going on? Dar refused to switch on his emotions? Hasn't he always wanted to have emotions?

"Avery!" Turning around to face the doctor standing beside him, he roared in panic. "Think of a solution to save Dar now! I swear, I swear with everything that I have, that no matter what happens in the future, in any situation, under any circumstances, I will not kill you."

"Even with your word, I am clueless about Dar's current situation. All I can do is return to the laboratory before making any further conjectures."

However, as the chip's original machinations were very complex, coupled with the current idiosyncratic complication, Avery feared that even as Dar's primary physician, he might not have any solutions with which to counter the problem.

Noticing Avery's total lack of confidence, Devon's heart sank. He turned to look at his brother whom he loved so dearly. Though he hated to see Daren in tears, he was even more unwilling to see him expressionless like a robot!

"Did it hurt that much? So much that you willingly gave up your emotions? Dar..."

Was the Dark Sun standing before him still the Dar he knew?

No! Of course this emotionless robot is not Dar. Where has Dar gone, then? He refused to turn on the emotion switch... Don't tell me that this means Dar will never come back again?

Has Dar been destroyed... by his own hands?

"Noooooooo!"

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v03c10 END\*\*\*\*\*

## Eclipse Hunter Extra 2

Translator: Wryn

Proofreaders: Catchkatch, Arc, Wryn

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"Theodore!"

Someone tapped Theodore Avery on the shoulder. "Want to grab a drink after work?"

Theodore turned and saw his lab mate behind him. Although cultivating good relationships was important for a research student--for the purposes of getting someone to monitor experiments if you had a date, churning out lab reports when stuck, and getting backup when the professor was out to get you, etc--he regretfully had to decline.

"Sorry, I need to rush home after the experiment is done."

Another lab mate elbowed the person who had extended the invitation, hissing under his breath, "Idiot! Theodore needs to take care of his kid brother at home!"

"Oh! In that case we'll head off first." The man was puzzled, but replied apologetically after several hints from his friend.

Theodore nodded and watched them leave, catching snippets of conversation. "Theodore needs to care for his brother? How old is his brother?"

"I heard that he's only ten and has serious health issues."

"What about his parents?"

"Are you stupid? Don't you know that Theodore came from an orphanage?"

"I see..."

Theodore smiled bitterly. He raised his head to look at the clock. Time had slipped by without him realising and it was already six in the evening. Although he wanted to continue working on his experiment, the thought of the ten-year-old at home made him stop. He packed up his things, locked up the laboratory, and left.

On the way home, he randomly picked a takeaway stall and bought two meal boxes.

His house wasn't far from the laboratory, but because of rush hour traffic, it was seven by the time he arrived home.

As he opened the front door, a moving object flung itself at him, giving him quite a shock.

Theodore gazed at the child in his arms, who was squeezing him for all he was worth. He dared not struggle for fear of hurting this fragile youth. "Let me go. The food will get cold," he said haplessly.

The child dropped his arms. "Jiefu[i], welcome back..." he greeted

meekly.

"Yes, I'm back." [ii]

The greeting made Theodore slightly annoyed. There's probably nobody as stupid as me.

During his rare free time outside of experiments, he had finally managed to get a girlfriend. But just after they became engaged his fiancée dumped him for someone else. However, that was not all she did. She dumped her little brother on him and disappeared without a trace...It was preposterous!

Theodore even suspected that his fiancée had approached him and agreed to the engagement just so she could ultimately abandon her brother with him. She knew that he was specialising in artificial organ transplants.

This child was born weak. Not only did he have a congenital heart disease, his immune system was also shot. Excluding minor issues, half his body was as good as useless.

Despite his urge to involve social services, Theodore knew that if this child was not given specialist medical attention he would depart from this world within a year. He was acutely aware of the fact that the social services orphanage did not garner the services of a medical specialist.

After all, he had lived there.

Knowing that sending the child to the orphanage was equivalent to a death sentence, Theodore dragged his feet, and before he knew it a year had passed since his fiancée had left them.

Yet the child was still alive. Theodore was a little proud of his accomplishment.

However, he was still unhealthy.

"Ridiculous. Even if I have the skills, I do not have the money."

Theodore glanced at the child from the corner of his eye. Not only skill was required to make this child healthy, but also time and money. Even if the three prerequisites were met, there was a significant probability that his body would not be able to endure a series of operations.

"Jiefu, I'm very hungry..." The child salivated at the aroma of the food.

"En." Theodore nodded and gently reminded, "Go take your medicine first."

The child nodded obediently and ran to the kitchen. He removed his personal pill box and began popping open bottle after bottle of pills, placing them on his palm one by one.

He sang as he gathered them. "Remember! The pills taken before each meal are in the white bottle. The pill taken before dinner once a day is in the black bottle. Take five in total before dinner. Don't count it wrong!"

Theodore shrugged off his jacket and set down his briefcase as he listened to the child sing. That was the method he had painstakingly created to teach the child which pills to take.

He could only have dinner with the child, so he had to train him to take his pills by himself.

After the child downed the pills, they sat down for dinner together. Even though it was just two takeaway dinners, the child was munching away at his food happily and bugging Theodore to let him watch cartoons.

Although it was bad to watch television while eating, he caved under the child's pleading. He put on a cartoon and wound up enjoying it himself. Cartoons these days were violent but entertaining. Brilliant! But unsuitable for young children.

Though Theodore knew that it was wrong when he saw the child roaring, "Charge! Kill all the baddies", "Rescue the girl" and the like, he only shrugged nonchalantly. He was a doctor, not an educator.

As for the child's future character development... if he could survive until the future, it would be a miraculous blessing.

\*\*\*\*\*

The neighbours rang Theodore. The boy had fainted and had been hospitalised.

Theodore rushed to the hospital. The presiding doctor locked eyes with him, conveying his unspeakable dilemma. He did not know how to break the news about the child's condition.

"If he doesn't have the operation within six months, he's going to die. You don't have to say anything. I know." Theodore said wearily, "I'm a doctor, too."

The doctor gave him an apologetic look. "Even if he underwent the operation, I'm afraid..."

... He might only last a few more months. He knew. He knew all of it, because he was a doctor.

\*\*\*\*\*

Returning to the laboratory, Theodore told his professor and friend, "I'm deferring my studies."

"Why?" His professor and friend thought incredulously. Theodore had the best results in the laboratory.

He lapsed into silence before replying. "I need money. I need to start working now."

"Work?" His friend was puzzled. "Don't you like research more?"

"I need money! I need it within six months!" Theodore persisted.

"That's impossible!" His friend exclaimed. "You have to start with an internship. You won't make any money within six months."

Theodore was aware of his capabilities. "My technical skills are ten times better than those real doctors!" he growled.

Seeing him agitated, his friend feebly replied. "Although your skills are superb, the hospital doesn't care about that. You will still have to start off as an intern."

Theodore was heartbroken. How could he make it in time?

It was impossible, so he chose an alternate path. He went underground and became an unlicensed doctor. A doctor obsessed with money.

With the recommendations of his professor and friend, he operated on and saved a number of patients with extremely low chances of survival. His reputation began to build; a reputation that was unmentionable and kept tightly under wraps.

With such a reputation money flowed easily, because everyone was afraid of death. To avoid death, people were willing to fork out extravagant amounts of money.

Theodore saved a sizable fortune rapidly. He bought the child better medicine and laboriously devised ways to provide extra nourishment. The boy's fragile state would not survive an operation otherwise.

In six months, he secretly performed at least fifty operations, amassing a small lump sum. He could just scrape enough to buy the artificial organs the child required, but not the best models available.

But the child could wait no longer. Any longer and he would not have the strength to survive the operation. Theodore could only pray that his flawless techniques and the child's determination would pull them through.

Three days later, it was almost time for the operation. Theodore bought a table full of the child's favourite food.

"If I get better, will Jiejie come back?" The child asked wide eyed.

Theodore busied himself over a stack of X ray films and replied off-handedly, "I don't think so."

"Oh" The child ate silently at the table decked out with food, disappointment leeching out of his eyes.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Dr Avery...His pulse rate has decreased."

"Get me a shot of adrenaline!"

Theodore panicked. Why? The operation was flawless up to this stage!

Beeeeep-----

The nurse yelled, "He's gone into cardiac arrest!"

Theodore was obviously aware of that. In shock, he yelled, "Ready for CPR!"

He grabbed the defibrillator paddles, shocking the child again and again. He fussed internally. If this continues, you'll get scorch marks on your chest, aren't you going to wake up? Do you want your chest to be charred?

The nurse muttered to herself, "We can't go on...The boy's heart is weak, after receiving so many shocks..."

"The operation failed."

"The child passed away, poor thing."

They continued the resuscitation efforts for an hour, two hours. Everyone knew that the child was dead.

Except for the doctor.

"Doctor..."

In the end, the nurses no longer knew how to proceed. The cardiac monitor had flat-lined a very, very long time ago.

Finally, Theodore ripped his mask off. Clutching the body of the child, he bellowed, "Why? The procedure was flawless. There wasn't a single mistake! Get up! I spent so much time and money, I abandoned my studies, I gave up my licence...Why did you still die? Bastard!"

"Bastard!"

Theodore howled as he tore out of the operating theatre.

\*\*\*\*\*

The child turned to ash. Theodore did not return to the laboratory but continued practicing as an unlicensed doctor, amassing an unsightly amount of money. He bought the best artificial organs only to burn them at the grave. Perhaps this way the child would have a healthy body in heaven.

Perhaps if I could've afforded these back then, you wouldn't have died.

Theodore silently threw the exorbitant artificial organs into the flames, one after another.

The best artificial organs were purchased and then cremated. He sought to perfect his skills, better procedural alternatives, aiming for a zero percent mortality rate. Only then could he ensure that the child would not die in his heart.

\*\*\*\*\*

Entering this dream laboratory with a bottomless fund, Theodore realised that he had forsaken his humanity. A covert laboratory with a limitless budget plunging straight into human experimentation... he knew that this was a place where humans were not regarded as human.

However, he still stepped into the shadows of the institution. Only in a place like this could he hone his skills further and develop better treatment methods.

But he was stunned when he saw that the subject of the trial... was a child.

He looked several years younger than his own child! Was he seven or eight?

The boy with the unique silver hair lay shackled on the operating table. He cried, screamed and whimpered in pain, "No! Dar is hurting! Gege. Gege!"

No one took notice of him.

Theodore's feet carried him over to the operating table. He placed his hand soothingly on the child's forehead and smiled, "Hello. Are you called Dar?"

The child sniffed and looked at him through bleary eyes.

"I'm Theodore. I am Dar's doctor."

The child did not seem to understand what a doctor was. He sobbed, "Gege, I want Gege....."

Theodore felt a stab of pain in his chest. His child was always calling out for his sister. Even after he was ruthlessly abandoned, he still insisted on wanting his sister back.

"Does Dar have a brother? Do you like Gege very much?"

The child nodded resolutely.

"Then you have to be a good boy. Dar is sick, that's why you can't see Gege. Dar has to bear with the pain, then you can meet Gege after you get better."

The child nodded determinedly and answered, "Ok. Dar will be good. Dar wants to see Gege."

The child stopped crying. It was more effective than any analgesia or sedative. The others in the laboratory were in awe of him.

But he was in greater awe and admiration of the child whose determination to see his brother trumped all else.

\*\*\*\*\*

Yet another operation.

The difference was, the previous operation was to save a child, and this was to kill one. Post-operatively, the child would be dead. Only a cyborg would remain.

Theodore was once again studying X ray films. The procedure of implanting the microchip played in his head in an endless loop, obliterating all other thoughts. He did not want to think about his original intentions for entering this laboratory and what he was about to do...Knowing that his actions had travelled down a completely alien path from his intentions would drive him insane.

The child gazed wide-eyed with anticipation before entering the operating theatre, "Doctor, after I get better, can I see Gege?"

Theodore froze. This question was so similar to another in the past...

His consciousness drifted back to the child in the past and he replied off-handedly, "En. You can see Gege after you get better."

The child's eyes shone with hope.

Theodore understood then, the best doctors, the best medical equipment and an inordinate amount of money could not compare to a lie.

Back then, the child did not die because of inferior products or a flawed operation. The real murderer of that child was the truth.

His sister was not coming back.

The truth being the truth was not the correct answer.

Had his truth killed his child? Theodore's chest throbbed with heartache. His eyes reddened and brimmed with unbidden tears. He hastened away, seeking to calm himself before proceeding as planned.

Dar was going to die in the end anyway. I absolutely won't love him!

Theodore stopped in his tracks. The insertion of the microchip was a perilous procedure, but perhaps this child would not die. He had pulled through so many life threatening experiments before, yet his eyes were still shining! He does not want to die!

However, the employer wanted Dar's emotions destroyed.

Theodore slumped against the wall and slid onto the ground. He buried his head between his knees and mumbled to himself, "Dar, you're about to die, can I not love you? Forgive me for not loving you, ok?"

"Doctor? Shall we begin the operation?" a nurse approached timidly.

Hearing that, Theodore rearranged his face and got his emotions under

control. He stood up and returned to the operating theatre.

The child delightedly chattered when he saw the doctor, "Doctor, after Dar returns to Gege's side, you must come visit Dar ok? You will definitely like Gege."

After...This child wants an 'after'. He wants a future!

He wants to live!

Dar was different from his child. He won't die, he will definitely pull through this operation. He will survive the operation!

Tears streamed down Theodore's face. He brusquely wiped them away with disgust, bellowing, "Damn it! My eyes hurt... terminate the operation! I have an experimental idea to discuss with the other doctors."

Theodore walked out of the operating theatre, his lips upturned in a faint smile, "Dar, you have to live on. I will make you live on."

You must live. Or I won't love you anymore.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Extra 2 END \*\*\*\*\*

[i]姊夫 (Jiefu): Husband of elder sister *i.e.* brother-in-law

[ii] The exchange "你回來了"(literally: You're back.) followed by "我回來了"(I'm back) is a greeting upon returning home, similar to the Japanese "tadaima" and okaeri".

# Eclipse Hunter v04 Prologue

Translator: LilsxD

Proofreader: Arc, Catchkatch

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## Character Introduction

DS II /Dark Sun Two

Personality: Robotic

Identity: Modified human clone of Dark Sun

Appearance: Identical to Dark Sun

Weapon: Identical to Dark Sun

Catchphrase: None

Lance

Personality: N/A

Identity: World-renowned singer

Appearance: Golden hair and red eyes

Weapon: Singing voice

Catchphrase: "Ah! Beauty that is unparalleled!"

Zyle

Personality: Humorous and witty driver

Identity: Kyle's younger brother

Appearance: A common driver's face that you see and forget

immediately

Weapon: Variety of brand-name cars

Catchphrase: "He eats less, sleeps less, but working hard and doing it well is my brother's forte."

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# Prologue

The year 2105. Following the decline of nations, the world was split into hundreds of trading organisations. With the temptations of further benefits, hundreds of trading organisations decided to combine and form trade cartels. The Solaris Federation, the most powerful of them all, has control over 30% of the global economy. It can be said that the Solaris Federation's leader holds the most power in the world.

It wasn't that no one tried to overthrow the Solaris Federation, but that Devon Solaris, its leader, was always one step ahead of his opposition. He would destroy his opponent before they even became a threat. The hunter became the hunted: just before the critical moment, those plotting against him found themselves in Devon Solaris' crosshairs. Every rival would curse about how close there were to success... but that they were ruined at the very last moment.

Not just once or twice, this happened each and every time. In time, the people realised it wasn't a coincidence, or divine intervention. It was just that Devon Solaris had complete control. He held everything in the palm of his hand.

Every opponent who tried to cross him swore they would never go against him again.

No conspiracy or coup d'etat could escape him. His dominance was absolute.

In this world, he was likened to God.

He could not be defeated.

The people called this legendary man the 'Solaris Emperor'.

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"Gege, I'm coming in!"

Daren opened the door to Devon's study. He sneakily popped his head in through the door with the cutest smile on his face.

"Are you busy, Gege?" he asked gently.

Nearly buried in documents, Devon lifted his head the moment he heard his little brother's voice. "Of course not. Come on in." He abandoned his work and left his secretary on the line without a care.

Smiling, he asked, "Dar, tell your brother--are you in a good mood today?"

"I'm happy!" Daren took two bounding leaps and jumped into Devon's arms.

"Really?"

Devon smiled as he hugged his precious little brother. He ruffled the youth's hair affectionately as he doted on him. "What did you do today? Why are you so happy? Hurry and tell Gege. Was it because school was really fun?"

Daren tilted his head to the side cutely. "Dar didn't go to school! Gege, you forgot again!" he teased. "I was at home playing with Doctor Avery."

Devon stiffened. Pretending nothing was wrong, he replied, "Is that so? Sorry, Gege didn't remember."

"No problem," Daren said, beaming.

Knock knock...

Devon raised his head. The door to the study wasn't closed; the person on the other side knocked merely out of courtesy.

At the doorway stood the other Daren.

From his looks to his body language, the other Daren was exactly the same as the Daren in his arms. The only difference was that the Daren next to him was smiling cheerfully. Even seeing an exact double of himself didn't faze his smile. However, the face of the Daren at the door possessed no expression, and half of his body was hidden by the shadows cast by the slightly ajar door.

Devon stared at the Daren by the door and then looked at the Daren smiling brightly beside him. He opened up his mouth but could not utter

a word.

"Dar!"

Avery shouted, panting for breath as he rushing to the doorway after the other Daren. From the corner of his eye, he quickly scanned the Devon and Daren in the study, before he patted the other Daren's shoulder.

"You return to the science lab first," he said gently. "I'll go and do a check up on you after."

"Yes." The Daren by the door expressionlessly nodded his head and turned to leave.

Next, Avery looked at the Daren inside the study. "DSII, you leave as well. Go back to the experimental lab," he ordered with a businesslike voice.

Daren—or, rather, the one who was called DSII—nodded his head and followed. From beginning to end he kept his cute smile on his face.

Once the two duplicates left, only the Solaris Emeror and Avery were left in the study.

Avery looked at the Emperor flatly. "Solaris Emperor, I activated the modified human clone of Dar—the DSII—in order to experiment on restoring him back to his normal self," he criticised disapprovingly. "I didn't do it for you to think of him as Dar's replacement!"

After Devon recovered from his stunned state, he flew into a rage. He drew his handgun and pointed it straight at Avery's face. "I know what I'm doing! I don't need you to tell me!" he yelled, furious.

Avery looked at him coldly for a moment. "Put down your gun," he said. "Guns can go off accidentally. If it were the past and it really did accidentally fire, I wouldn't mind even if I really died. However, the situation at present is quite different. If I were to die, Dar would share my fate. I believe you would not want to see that happen."

Devon's expression stiffened, and he slowly lowered the gun.

Seeing this, Avery's cold expression relaxed. At least this guy still cares a lot about Dar, he thought to himself.

"Solaris Emperor, don't think of DSII as Dar," he reminded him kindly. "If you're nice to DSII, that would mean hurting Dar. Although, at present, he is keeping up this expressionless and heartless Dark Sun impression. No one knows whether he really has no emotions left—"

"I know! Of course I understand that!" Devon barked, interrupting him as he ruthlessly threw the handgun across the room. He turned back and bellowed at Avery, "I don't want to hurt him, either. But I really want to see his smile. I just want to see that. But he won't smile no matter what. He won't smile!"

Avery sighed.

In reality, the real Daren could still smile, but it was only if he were ordered to. That smile definitely wasn't the one that Devon wanted to see. Seeing that mechanical smile would only make his heart hurt even more. It would only make him think about why Daren became that way. And a large part of the reason was because of his own poor decisions.

"I'm going to continue with my experiments."

Avery had wracked his brains; the only thing he could think to do to solve this predicament was try and wake Dar up as soon as possible. That was the only way.

Devon nodded in agreement for a moment before he abruptly realised who Avery was experimenting on. He thought about the aftermath of those corpses he had experimented on and how their limbs had been torn apart and broken...

"Don't hurt DSII!" he couldn't help but say.

Avery stopped in his tracks. He turned around and looked at him, a frown growing on his face.

Devon struggled to find a reason. "He...He looks too similar to Dar. It's only because of that..."

Avery was silent. He nodded. "I'll try my best." Then he walked out and closed the door behind him.

Devon fell loudly back onto his black office chair.

This chair was crafted in accordance with the standards in ergonomics. It was made to reduce fatigue to a minimum, and make sure that the person sitting in it would have a healthy body. It was an expensive chair that a normal person would never be able to afford in their lifetime. However, at this moment, it was as uncomfortable as a broken chair abandoned to become garbage.

It was elegant and it was out of reach from others. But it was icily cold, with no colour to it. It was also separate. Alone. Like the position of Solaris Emperor.

The seat's owner buried his face in his hands. "Didi...Dar, sorry. I'm so sorry," he murmured.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter Volume 4 Prologue END  
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# Volume 4 Chapter 1

Lesson 1: Solitariness, aside from making friends

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"Dr Avery, I'm heading off to school. Bye."

Daren Avery looked the picture of a model student as he waved goodbye to Theodore, with his immaculate hairstyle and backpack.

As for Avery, he had the haggard look of a barely functioning drug addict, as was his early morning characteristic. He reflexively waved his unoccupied hand upon hearing the words 'school' and 'bye'.

"Bye Dar; be careful," he wheezed.

Daren saw Ezart leaning against a nearby fence the moment he walked out the door. He trotted over immediately. "Morning Ezart!" he greeted.

"M-hm," Ezart grunted in response as he chewed a piece of toast.

After a prolonged silence on their way to school, Daren quipped, "You're really early today."

Ezart gulped down his toast and wiped his mouth.

"It's because of your recent weirdness," he grumbled. "Your dad asked me to watch you closely, making me wake up at an ungodly hour. You're just a little quiet; nothing exceptionally weird. I have no idea what they're paranoid about!"

Daren came to an abrupt stop, looking at the shop by the roadside.

"Wanna buy an upgrade chip?" Ezart knew without looking that it was the toy store where Daren bought all of Little Ai's upgrades.

"Models..." Daren murmured.

"What?" Ezart did not hear him.

Daren became silent. Instead of repeating himself, he shook his head. "I don't want to buy an upgrade chip. I want to go to school—I can't be late."

"It's still early!" Ezart scratched his head. Seems like other than being quiet, this guy is a little off. He hasn't displayed that 'puppy dog eyes' look recently... But no point over-thinking it. He grabbed Daren by the arm and dragged him towards the toy store.

Daren tried to shake Ezart off. "I want to go to school to study seriously. I can't be late," he declared solemnly.

But Ezart held on tight. Based on his current strength, Daren could not shake him off without hurting him.

“Just a quick look. We won’t be late!” Ezart continued to drag him.

He was originally a weirdo with monstrous strength, but after accidentally ingesting Dr Avery’s experimental strength-enhancing substance, he was now packing the power of a tank. In addition, his speed and reaction times were vastly different from before, so now he truly deserved the title of Hercules reincarnate.

However, Daren was no small fry. As a result of seven year’s worth of extensive modifications by Dr Avery, he had an alter ego that was completely different from his nerdy appearance—Dark sun, the ultimate cyborg.

So Hercules and the strongest cyborg Dark Sun became locked in a struggle in front of the toy store.

“Stop! Please stop!” The store attendant begged repeatedly without daring to approach either of them.

Ezart was straining so hard veins were standing out on his neck. On the other hand, Daren was also in unspeakable agony. Although his strength was incomparable to Ezart’s, he was adept at maximising output by utilising every single part of his body in the battle for supremacy of strength.

Only the resulting agony felt like being steam-rolled repeatedly by a

tank.

Both of them turned towards the store attendant, simultaneously biting out, "Whatcha... want?"

The store attendant pointed at their feet in distress.

They looked down and released each other at the same time, skidding several feet due to the sudden loss of resistance. A new, ten centimetre deep depression with multiple cracks had appeared in the concrete slab below them.

Ezart was silent for a moment before he glanced at the displeased store attendant. He shoved the person beside him. "Hey! Your brother will pay, right?"

Dark Sun fished out a credit card from his shirt pocket.

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"How is it? Can you read it?"

Eli shook his head and ducked it lower under Eloise' glare, ignoring her.

Although she was frustrated, Eloise could not hold it against him. She hung her head by the window as she wailed. "Dar.. My cute Dar! He doesn't smile anymore—he's not cute anymore!"

" ... "

Yelan Academy's slacker class D was exceptionally subdued today. Compared to their usual boisterous shouting, arms trading and skirmishes, it was unusually quiet except for the intermittent wailing and screaming of a single female by the window.

On closer inspection, another major difference could be observed: they were all sitting obediently in their assigned seats.

"Class, today the lesson for battle history shall be... Sorry, I've walked into the wrong classroom," the teacher mumbled to himself as he walked into the classroom and walked out again.

Within a minute, he was back again, staring at the sign at the entrance for a full five minutes before stepping warily onto the podium. The teacher stared at the students, wide eyed as they stared right back at him.

Ezart was sleeping as per usual and Daren was waiting patiently for class to start, with notebook and pen in hand. The rest were 'obediently' rooted to their seats. Although there were only a few with books on their desks, it was bizarre even for them to be seated. If they had their textbooks ready he would run out of classroom in terror.

The teacher was clueless as to what was happening. He dabbed the beads of sweat from his brow with his handkerchief as he stammered, "Shall we have a self-study period?"

The students stared at him wide-eyed, afraid to answer him. Sensing the situation, the teacher did not dare to declare it a self-study period.

“What’s there to study? You might as well dismiss the class!” Eloise, still plastered to the window, grumbled. “If you don’t dismiss the class Dar will ignore us. Even if it is a self-study lesson Dar will ignore us. Isn’t that the same as waiting for a whole period? Annoying!”

The students took a sharp intake of breath collectively, then stared daggers at the teacher on the podium. He perceptively announced, “Class dismissed.”

The class did not react to the announcement, but instead, when Eloise cheered and ran around the classroom, the entire class escaped screaming.

Eli sauntered over to the middle of classroom, wading through the slew of evacuating students who parted like the red sea before him, giving him a wide berth despite clambering over each other in their haste to escape.

The teacher paled and exited hastily without even daring to look at Eloise.

What sort of joke is this? To be able to scare a whole class off... Is she human?

The moment he heard class was dismissed, the microchip told Daren that it was time to go home. Hence, he silently packed up his belongings

in preparation to leave.

Eloise sped to his side. "Wait a second!" she yelled.

Dark sun greeted her politely while packing his bag. "Hello, Eloise."

She placed both hands on his shoulders and breathlessly asked, "D...Dar, have lunch together with us?"

Dark Sun declined with a shake of his head. "It's only 10:30am. It's not time for lunch yet."

"Breakfast then?" Eloise rubbed her stomach. She really had not eaten this morning.

"I've had breakfast. Thank you for the invitation. I need to go home now. See you some other time."

Eloise was at a loss. She glanced at Eli, who was paying attention to the ground. She then looked to Ezart... who was still asleep.

She smacked Ezart's desk furiously. "Wake up, porcupine head! School is over!" she bellowed.

Ezart jerked upright but his eyes were still unfocused from sleep.

Eloise screamed into his ear. "School is over! Porcupine head!"

Ezart jumped to his feet and shouted back in gusto. "School's over? Impossible! I just fell asleep not long ago... eh?" He belatedly realised that neither the teacher nor the students remained.

School is really over? Ezart scratched his head in disbelief.

"We're going to the battle simulator!"

Eloise was in a foul mood and was itching to bash someone up. But she suddenly remembered that Ezart's strength was not like before. If it was mano-a-mano, she could be asking for a beating instead.

She hurriedly amended her statement. "I want to team up with Eli."

"Ok," Ezart replied straightforwardly.

Dark Sun politely excused himself. "I'm heading off. Ezart, Eloise, Eli... Bye."

"You're not coming?" Ezart asked in disappointment. He had not had a chance to duel Dark Sun since his power boost.

Dark Sun shook his head.

"You're actually not plastering yourself onto others? Weren't you hankering to have supper all the time in the past?" After a moment Ezart shrugged, unconcerned. Although he did not get to fight Dark Sun there

was still Eloise. And if that was insufficient, he could duel Elia, too.

Eloise pinched Ezart's arm. "Dar is obviously not right, you big oaf!" she chastised.

"He's just having a tiff with his brother!" Ezart remained nonchalant.

"That's not true!" Eloise insisted stubbornly. "Papa Avery already said that Dar is not himself, but Dark Sun instead."

"What—Dar or Dark Sun?" Ezart huffed. "Dar is just having a tantrum. He'll be fine in a while. He can't stay mad for long with his personality."

"You... you don't understand the situation at all!" Eloise screeched.

Despite the ruckus behind him, Dark Sun continued to walk out of the classroom towards the school gates.

"Dar, wait for me."

Dark Sun instantly analysed that the voice belonged to Elia, coming from a distance of about a hundred meters.

According to Elia's past behaviour, he would not seek his company for an incredibly late breakfast or ridiculously early lunch. It must be about matters of import. Hence, he stopped to allow Elia to catch up.

"Dar, the Principal is looking for you." Elian looked rather uneasy. "He said that he has a mission you must complete."

Why must this mission have to occur when Dar is off kilter, of all times? Elian had a strong urge to wail like Eloise. If Dar refused to accept the mission, but the Principal insisted on it, what were those stuck between the two parties supposed to do?

Dark Sun quietened, allowing his microchip to determine the course of action.

The microchip analysed that, since the mission was what he promised previously and well within his capabilities, accepting the mission would appease the Principal's vengeful streak and prevent his master from knowing that he had made such a promise.

Dark Sun nodded. "Ok, let's go see the Principal."

Elian heaved a sigh of relief before the anxious feeling began to grow again. Although Dar was willing to see the Principal now, he might not accept the mission. Even if he were to accept the mission, if he was injured, then the Solaris Emperor...

Elian's stomach was in knots.

"Elian, are you coming?"

Elian hesitated for a moment before replying. "Ok."

He smiled wistfully. He really could not get used to the Dar who called him by his full name! I hope Dr Avery can come up with a solution to bring back the Dar who calls me 'Elian ge'.

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"Protective services detail." The Principal, Antonias, braced both hands on his desk. With an ugly expression, he growled, "You have to accept it this time, no matter what."

Daren, no, Dark Sun—at this point he had already donned Dark Sun's attire, wearing the red shirt, boots, and, most importantly, the protective visor that covered his face—emotionlessly stared at the Principal through the visor.

"State the details of the mission," he said in an even voice.

Antonias did not waste any time. "You have heard of Lance, correct?" he asked frankly.

Dark Sun gave a straightforward reply in turn. "I have not."

Antonias was suddenly at a loss for words, and did not know how to continue. He had only used that sentence as an opening remark and hadn't been asking Dark Sun whether he actually knew of Lance. In this world, not knowing of Lance was almost as rare as not knowing who the Solaris Emperor was.

Elian's expression changed, and he hurriedly pulled Dark Sun into a corner for a hushed conversation.

"Dar, Lance is the most famous singer in the world who rose to fame at just 18 years old. It's been 10 years since then, and it can be said that there is no one in the world who has not heard of him..."

After saying this, Elian was a little stymied. Wasn't there someone who didn't know of Lance right in front of him?

Dark Sun nodded his head, walked back to the Principal's desk, and said, "Continue."

Antonias hurriedly cleared the perplexed expression from his face. Right now, the point was to get Dark Sun to accept the mission. It didn't matter if he knew of Lance; after all, this mission only required a person strong enough to complete it. Even if said person lacked even basic common knowledge, that didn't matter in the slightest.

"The mission is to stick close to Lance and ensure his safety."

"I decline."

Receiving such a straightforward reply, Antonias grimaced slightly. "You haven't forgotten that, of the five missions you agreed to, you haven't completed a single one yet?" he shot back coldly.

"I haven't forgotten." Dark Sun shook his head and explained. "I am unable to shadow and protect another person 24/7. I have another master, another mission."

Hearing this, Antonias' expression relaxed a bit. He explained further. "Protecting him during class hours is enough. For a duration of one month, not a lengthy period of time."

"I am unable to leave the school." Dark Sun persisted in declining.

Antonias clapped his hands and said, smiling, "You won't need to leave the school. I just need you to protect him here, within YeLan Academy."

"Lance is coming to our school?" Elian couldn't help exclaiming.

He knew that the stir caused by this information would probably only be marginally less than that caused by the Solaris Emperor attending YeLan Academy... But to be honest, right now the odds of the Solaris Emperor sneaking into YeLan Academy to visit his little brother was not that low.

Elian didn't know whether he should laugh or cry. It seemed to him that, after meeting Dar, lots of practically 'impossible' occurrences had suddenly become much more likely.

"Right." Antonias' face darkened. "I don't know what's wrong with that guy," he grumbled. "He isn't content with just singing. Of all the things he could have said, he had to say that attending a battle academy was his dream, and now he's here to fulfill it. And of all the battle academies out

there, he just had to pick ours."

"That's really unfortunate." Elian finally understood why the Principal was so insistent about Dark Sun accepting this mission.

It was Lance, after all! What kind out-of-this-world visitor was that?

Those who wanted to kidnap him or kill him numbered at least eighty thousand, if not more, and among them would be many professional kidnappers and assassins. If something bad happened to him at YeLan Academy, then the Academy would most definitely be shut down, and then each student would be classified as a suspect. Perhaps the Principal would be forced to spend the twilight of his life dodging assassins.

"Sin and I could also shadow and protect him," Elian volunteered, very sincerely.

"Absolutely not!" Antonias protested, his vexation showing on his face. "This annoying guy said something about how he is only coming to attend classes and how he also already possesses considerable combat skills. Therefore, he doesn't need someone to protect him... anyways, in the end, he will only accept one bodyguard. And also..."

"...Also?" Elian echoed, his interest piqued.

Antonias continued with a straight face. "That bodyguard must be physically attractive, with a slim figure, have to be poised, have lustrous hair, and have exceptional combat abilities. Only the gender wasn't specified."

Hearing this, Elian didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Is he choosing a bodyguard or a wife?" Elian asked.

"I'm not sure, myself."

"Although Dark Sun seems mostly suitable... because he never removes his visor, does he still count as physically attractive?"

Elian glanced at Dark Sun for a moment; aside from that protective visor, he truly seemed to fit all of Lance's requirements. But, regardless, Dark Sun would never agree to remove his visor. Elian couldn't resist suggesting, "Isn't it better to assign Sin?"

"Not a chance! I would much rather send you than Sin," Antonias exclaimed. "That guy Sin has no problem at all with assassination-type missions, but he should never be given missions requiring him to keep someone alive!"

That's true... Elian wrinkled his forehead and pondered for a long moment, then shook his head. "No way," he concluded. "I'm not confident that I can adequately protect Lance all on my own. But with the addition of Eloise and Eli, it might work out."

"Obviously, that is unacceptable," Antonias replied grumpily. "If it was acceptable, I would have already sent the whole ECS to become Lance's study buddies!"

Elia couldn't help but agree. Indeed, for people like Lance, letting the

entire ECS act as bodyguards wouldn't be excessive.

But Lance insisted on only one person, and the obvious candidate was... both pairs of eyes shifted to Dark Sun.

"I won't take off my visor," Dark Sun answered simply.

"You won't have to. Eloise says that she can tell that you're attractive just from your figure and poise."

"That's probably biased..." Elian mumbled.

Antonias coughed once. "Anyway, I've already given Dark Sun's photograph to Lance for him to appraise, and he also agrees. The rest is up to you."

So that's how it was. Elian nodded his head, and the two of them once again focused their gazes on Dark Sun.

Dark Sun was silently waiting for his microchip to make a judgment. This moment lasted for only a few seconds before he opened his mouth and replied. "The duration of this mission is too long. Unless you count it as two missions, I will not accept. Moreover, at the beginning you agreed that I would have the power to turn down missions."

Are you trying to kick a man when he's down?

Antonias' expression changed suddenly. His eyes widened and he fixed

Dark Sun with a deathly glare. The latter, under the piercing attack of the Principal's gaze, remained expressionless. The Principal had no choice but to take one deep breath after another and then spoke through clenched teeth. "All right, all right! If you say two then it'll be two!"

Hearing this, Dark Sun nodded once.

The Principal mumbled to himself. "I'll have you remember, if in the future all the missions I give to you are not of an extraordinary difficult level, I, Antonias, will change my name to Petunias!"

Elian couldn't help but start to worry, because, to tell the truth, Dar's true status was probably higher than Lance's. Dar was the world leader's most precious loved-one. Under normal circumstances, if Dar had liked listening to music, for all anyone knew the first person to kidnap Lance would be the Solaris Emperor, to make Lance Dar's exclusive stereo.

"Now the supreme Young Master is going to protect a music player?"

Just thinking about it made Elian feel extremely helpless, and deeply afraid on top of that. If that supreme Lord knew that his darling little brother had actually guarded a musician, Elian wouldn't be surprised if the Solaris Emperor viciously beat up Lance himself.

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"DS II, turn on the switch for emotions."

Theodore had a report in hand, the pupils behind his spectacles utterly

focused on the modified human clone of Dark Sun before him.

"Understood."

DS II was silent for a moment, and then revealed a brilliant smile, reporting, "The emotions section is already switched on, Doctor Avery."

Even though DS II's emotions were successfully activated, Theodore's expression wasn't happy in the slightest. "Were there any mutually conflicting areas?" he asked carefully. "Was there any conflict with the previous order not to switch on the emotion section?"

"Nope!" DS II said, grinning cheerfully. "Later orders supersede earlier ones, Mr. Avery. Have you forgotten?"

Hearing this, Theodore revealed an expression full of concern. Of course he hadn't forgotten this setup; normally, it would only be proper for Dark Sun to follow the most recent orders. This was a setup every android possessed. Otherwise, if the master first ordered the android to walk, then ordered it to stop, should the android walk or should it stop?

Earlier, Devon had first ordered Daren to follow his own wishes and later ordered him to forcibly switch on the emotion section. In the normal course of events, it should be the latter order that would take effect.

However, reality wasn't like that. Now, no matter how many times Devon ordered Dar to switch on the emotion section, Dar remained as the heartless and emotionless Dark Sun. Using the first order as precedence, he refused to switch on the emotion section.

"Why doesn't DS II have a problem like this?" Theodore mumbled. "So is it really true that actual humans are unable to be controlled using simple on and off switches?"

He suddenly thought of something. Earlier, when Dark Sun had switched on the emotion section for the first time, his entire body had literally collapsed. However, when DS II switched on the emotion section, he had only needed a few seconds' worth of time.

"Because what you turned on was just the switch for an imitation of human emotion, not real human emotion!" Theodore sighed gustily.

He looked at DS II. The latter looked back a cheerful, if slightly confused, smile. He was so adorable that he seemed innocent yet pitiful. Everyone would want to have such a cute little brother.

Theodore looked him in the eye, murmuring, "You actually play the role of little brother very well. No wonder even the Solaris Emperor couldn't resist treating you as Dar's substitute."

Agh! He feared starting up DS II was a waste of effort after all: DS II and Dark Sun were simply too different.

So how was he supposed to turn Dark Sun back into Dar?

This was the first time Theodore had felt so powerless. A broken leg could be reconstructed, a ruined hand might as well be switched for another.. it didn't matter how serious an injury it was. At most he would

have to replace his entire body. With the Solaris Emperor's financial resources and his own surgical abilities, physical injuries were nothing to him.

But what could he do about emotions?

Theodore was stuck. Even a surgeon with the highest degree of skill would be unable to crack open Dark Sun's skull and infuse something as intangible as emotions, right?

However, if he could not think of a method to restore Dark Sun back to Dar, he was afraid that there would be a certain person all too happy to crack open his skull.

"Doctor Avery."

Theodore lifted his head to look. Surprisingly, the person who returned was Daren, the reason for his current vexation.

He felt a bit doubtful. Even though his sense of time was by no means accurate and there was no difference between night and day in the basement, why was it that he felt Dar hadn't left too long ago?

Evidently the clock thought so too; it was only nearing noon.

"Dar, why did you return so early?"

Dark Sun stood up from the couch. Another sofa descended right after

with Ezart sitting on it.

"The teacher ended class early," Dark Sun replied simply.

"What strange thing is this... Dar's twin brother?"

Ezart noticed at once the person standing by Theodore's side, who looked exactly like Dark Sun.

"This is the modified human clone of Dark Sun, originally kept as a back up to avoid problems with Dark Sun's experiment. Just call him DS II." Theodore gave a cursory explanation, and then looked at Ezart excitedly. "Come quickly, let me examine your body's condition," he said.

Ezart dragged his feet at an agonising pace as he walked over.

Theodore couldn't wait and simply decided to meet him halfway. He ran his hands all over Ezart's body, asking as he did so, "Do you feel uncomfortable anywhere, or have you experienced anything particularly strange?"

"No."

Ezart wrinkled his brows. Every time was just like this; if Ezart hadn't known that this guy was treating him just like the pile of corpses in his laboratory, Ezart would have actually believed that this doctor had some disgustingly perverted habits.

"That's just too perfect!" Theodore couldn't help praising. "Why is it that I am unable to achieve the same results? Ah, Ezart! Tell me again about that time when you took a dose of the muscular reformation drug."

"Again?" Ezart rolled his eyes, growling. "I must have told you a hundred times already!"

"Doing a checkup is extremely tedious anyway. Why don't you treat it as telling a story for an elder?"

He's actually willing to admit that he's old. he is indeed a nutcase about his work... Ezart was left speechless.

"Doctor Avery, Ezart, I'm going upstairs to modify guns." Dark Sun suddenly opened his mouth and spoke.

"All right, all right. Go do your own thing." Theodore didn't even bother turning his head and just replied flippantly.

Dark Sun sat on the sofa once again. Before he went upstairs, he saw...

"Who are you?" DS II looked at Ezart curiously.

"Ezart Lah\*!" Ezart replied grumpily.

"DS II, help me prepare the examination instruments, and then help him lie down."

Theodore's energy levels were suddenly renewed. He'd gone through an entire morning of setbacks, and now he was finally about to start his experiment... No, it's a checkup, a checkup! This checkup was more effective than a dose of adrenaline.

"Yes!" DS II smiled brightly and replied energetically. "Come with me, Ezart Lah!"

"It's Ezart!"

Dark Sun pressed the 'up' button.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v04c01 END \*\*\*\*\*

Footnote:

\*啦 Lah - a colloquial sound of exasperation *emphasis*. *Present in mandarin, many chinese dialects, malay, manglish and singlish. For more information visit <http://www.singlishdictionary.com/>*

## Lesson 2: Escape, aside from confrontation

Translator: Irid,

Proofreader: Arc, Catchkatch, Wryn

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"How is Dar's condition?" Theodore asked as he attached electrodes to Ezart's body.

"The same. That kid is throwing a huge temper tantrum this time," Ezart replied as he reclined lazily.

"This time it isn't just a temper tantrum," Theodore sighed.

"Why do all of you like denying it so much?" Ezart asked. "The way I see it, he's just throwing a temper tantrum. All you have to do is coax him a bit, and after some time everything will be fine!"

Theodore laughed bitterly. If only it was really that easy.

"As for you guys, leaving this thing that looks so much like Dar in the house can't be too good, right?" Ezart scrutinised DS II.

This... 'thing' is practically identical to Dar.

"That won't be a problem; there's no way you would confuse him with Dark Sun. DS II is a clone. He does not have a brain, so to speak, and his skull contains only computer chips, so he's completely different from Dark Sun, whose foundation is human. Even if one day DS II crashed suddenly and claimed to be Dark Sun, an x-ray would easily clear things up," Theodore flippantly replied.

"That's not the problem..."

Ezart scratched his head, unable to put the reason in words. He just thought this situation seemed really weird. Seeing two Dars was already quite weird for Ezart; when Dar looked at himself standing in front of him, he must have felt exceedingly strange!

Ring ring...

"Phone!" DS II called out.

Since he happened to be right next to the phone, he picked it up. Smiling happily, he said, "Hello, this is the Solaris Residence. DS II speaking."

Devon's face appeared on the telephone screen. At first, when he saw Dar's adorable smiling face, Devon's heart leapt violently in what was almost pure ecstasy, believing that Theodore had finally succeeded in bringing Dar back... but after the next sentence, he realised that it was DS II. He froze and his joy quickly faded. Suddenly, his heart contracted painfully.

"Gege, you're okay, right?" DS II's eyes were wide, his face full of concern.

Hearing the word 'Gege' only made Devon's heartbreak worse, and he reached out a hand to turn off the telephone screen. The sound of "Solaris Emperor" drifted through the phone. That was Kyle's voice, and his tone was extremely strained.

"Gege, gege, you're okay, right?" DS II asked worriedly, his eyes immediately reddening.

"I'm fine, fine."

Devon turned the screen on again as he replied with these words. His face was as white as a sheet, but his expression was still as haughty as usual. He threw a glance to the side, saying coldly, "I don't need to take any medicine. Just continue doing your job, Bill."

"Gege, are you alright?" DS II tilted his head as he asked, eyes flushed red, expression pitiful.

Devon looked deeply into that face, and sighed. "DS II, leave us for a bit and let me talk with Avery."

"Okay."

Theodore braced himself as he walked over to the telephone.

Devon did not bother to beat around the bush. "How is Dar's condition?"

"Same as usual." After Theodore said this, he didn't dare look at the screen to see how ugly Devon's expression had become.

Devon was silent for some time, his pale face darkening.

"Should I put you through to Dar?" At that moment, Theodore only wished to see less of the Solaris Emperor.

Devon lifted his head and had just opened his mouth when...

"Solaris Emperor, it is time for your conference."

Devon quieted, then said, "There's no need to put me through to Dar; I'll return home in a bit anyway. Is Ezart there? Just have him stay a little longer. It'll be fine for him and Dar to go to school together tomorrow."

"No way. At night I have to fight in the arena." Ezart replied without a hint of social grace.

"You're not allowed to bring Dar with you to fight in the arena! It's too dangerous!" Devon ranted furiously.

Ezart snorted. "Even if I wanted to bring him now, do you think the present him would come willingly?"

"Ezart!" Theodore hurriedly tried to interrupt his words. Don't remind the Solaris Emperor of Dar's current condition...

Devon was silent for a moment. In the end he just replied emotionlessly. "I'm going to attend the conference."

And with that, he hung up.

"Can't you even hold back from saying two sentences?"

Theodore almost sounded like Eloise when she wailed. After a moment, he laughed bitterly. "You're not afraid of him, but I am very afraid," he said.

Ezart gave the doctor a contemptuous look. As he tore off the electrodes from his body, he said, "Are you done with the checkup? I told you I'm doing great, but you still insist that I come every three days." He clicked his tongue irritably. "I'm in a hurry today, so I'll be leaving."

"Wait a second!" Theodore howled. "Just let me experiment for a bit!"

"... Experiment?"

"I mean, examine a bit." Theodore used his most innocent expression as he corrected himself.

\*\*\*\*\*

I should at least say goodbye to that kid. It'll be troublesome if he sulks even more.

Ezart walked up to Dark Sun's room on the second floor. Dark Sun hadn't closed his door, so Ezart saw with a single glance that he was sitting at his desk. On it was a half-finished gun and a huge pile of parts, but Dark Sun was not modifying the gun.

He was staring at the telephone on the wall.

Ezart scratched his head. "Your brother is busy with meetings and said he would return later today," he said. "That's why he didn't request to be connected to you."

Dark Sun turned his head, nodded, and then lowered his head and continued modifying guns.

"Well then, I'm leaving for the arena."

Dark Sun lifted his head and stated one sentence, "See you tomorrow." Then he lowered his head and started to modify his guns once again.

Ezart looked Dark Sun up and down. Is this guy acting strangely? Even though he has been behaving strangely these days, he seems to be even stranger now.

Ezart watched for a long moment but could not work it out. Since he was running late, he scratched his nose and disappeared in a flash.

Ezart was not long gone before Theodore hurriedly ran up to Dark Sun.

"Where's Ezart? Has he left?"

Dark Sun shifted his head, then turned back around, saying, "He left."

Theodore lifted the object he was holding and said somewhat helplessly, "He forgot to take his backpack."

"I'll take it to him." Dark Sun stood up.

"Okay."

Dark Sun took the backpack and walked out.

Theodore had originally planned to leave and continue performing his own experiments, but suddenly something on the table sparkled and caught his eye.

He hesitated for a moment. After hearing Dark Sun shut the front door, Theodore sneakily stepped into the room and walked to the desk. He looked towards the source of that brightness but found that it was only a few drops of water.

Drops of water?

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98.2% water, 1.8% solid consisting of sodium, potassium, calcium, magnesium, chlorine, and other trace elements... consistent with human tears.

"Tears?"

Theodore was astonished. Even though he had collected the few drops of water for examination and had suspicions about what those drops were... yet he was not entirely convinced it was possible. This was because Dark Sun did not shed tears, not unless Theodore or Devon ordered him to shed tears.

Then why were there teardrops on Dark Sun's desk?

Dark Sun would not cry. Does that mean that the emotion switch has been activated? Has Dark Sun reverted back to being Dar?

But how was that possible? Absolutely nothing had happened to trigger it. Besides the two of them, no one had visited or spent time with Dark Sun at home. No one...

Theodore suddenly thought of Ezart's words.

Dar is just throwing a temper tantrum.

Staring blankly, Theodore thought about it. Maybe...

"Theodore, where's Dar? Why isn't he at home? Where'd he go?" Devon's voice suddenly drifted through from the telephone.

Theodore looked towards the phone, which showed that it was actually a call from upstairs. "Solaris Emperor?" he gaped. "Wh-why did you return so quickly? Didn't you have a meeting?"

Devon promptly bellowed, "I was so worried about Dar that my heart was hurting; my stomach was hurting. There was no way I could hold a conference like that! Other than quickly returning to visit him, there was nothing else I wanted to do! Where's Dar?"

"Ezart forgot his backpack earlier. Dar went to deliver it. He should be back soon."

"I see." Devon nodded, his expression gloomy.

"I think you should go take some painkillers," Theodore suggested sincerely.

"I haven't eaten anything. If I take painkillers, my stomach is doomed!"

"I'll get DS II to cook you some noodles."

"No, no!"

Devon was so agitated that he practically leapt up. Turning to face

Theodore, who looked on in shock, he explained somewhat tiredly. "I don't want to treat DS II as Dar anymore."

"But I want you to treat him as Dar."

Devon was stunned. He lifted his head and looked at Theodore shrewdly.

The corners of Theodore's lips curved slightly upwards. "Regarding the matter of restoring Dar, I have some ideas..." he said slowly.

\*\*\*\*\*

Dark Sun walked home quickly. He was slightly late because Ezart was not at the arena he usually frequented, but at another, causing Dark Sun to spend some time searching.

He opened the front door, walked into the living room, and was about to deliver the food he was holding to Dr. Avery...

"The noodles Dar cooks are the tastiest!"

"Really? Then Gege should eat more."

Dark Sun slowed to a halt. He spotted Devon as soon as he walked into the living room. Together with DS II, who was smiling adorably, both of them were slurping big bowls of steaming hot noodles. Devon was even attentively wiping a bit of soup that had dribbled down the corner of DS

II's mouth.

When Devon turned his head and noticed Dark Sun, he stared blankly for a bit before saying, as if startled, "Dar, you're back."

"Would you like to eat something?" Devon said, beaming. "I'll have Da-... DS II cook for you, all right? DS II?" At the last sentence, Devon turned his head, smiling at DS II.

"The noodles DS II cooks are really delicious," he added.

DS II smiled happily. "From now on DS II will have to cook noodles often for Gege," he said.

"Great."

Devon indulgently ruffled DS II's hair, exactly like what he used to do with Dar.

Dark Sun was silent for a moment. "Master, I'm going to bring Dr. Avery supper," he declared.

Devon nodded indifferently. "Ok." He continued eating his noodles, smiling and chatting with DS II.

Dark Sun sat on the couch and pressed the button to access the basement, heading towards Theodore's laboratory.

After the sofa descended, Devon turned his head to look at the spot where Dark Sun had been moments before.

"Gege?" DS II revealed a doubtful expression.

"Bring me some painkillers." Devon ordered coldly, without bothering to look at DS II.

"All right, Gege." DS II continued to smile brightly. He immediately put down the bowl he was holding to retrieve the painkillers Devon requested.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Dar... what a surprise! You actually bought me supper?"

Theodore was currently gorging on a bowl of noodles. He smiled apologetically. "I'm terribly sorry; DS II has already cooked some noodles for me. Thank goodness he's here, or else I would have starved to death! Why don't you put the food over there? If I get hungry later, I'll think about eating it."

Dark Sun put down the meal containers.

"Okay then. Go modify your guns!"

Theodore dismissed Dark Sun with a wave and then lowered his head once more, continuing to eat noodles as he pored over a pile of

experimental data.

Dark Sun nodded his head, turned away, and left. When he sat down on the sofa and returned upstairs, Theodore put down his noodles and lifted his head to watch the underside of the ascending sofa with a concerned expression.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the middle of the night, two habitual night owls were not sleeping as usual. The unusual part was that one of them was not in the study barking orders to his secretary, and the other was not maniacally performing experiments by defacing corpses. Instead, they were chatting together in the laboratory.

"How is it?"

"My heart is in greater turmoil."

"Who's asking about you? I was asking about Dar."

"It seems to be working. Today he actually neglected to greet me before returning to his room, except..."

"Except what?"

"Treating him like this makes me miserable!"

"Just take more painkillers! The end justifies the means. If it means it will restore Dar, won't the pain be worth it?"

"Of course, but I'm warning you, if your rotten idea falls through, you'd better be careful or I'll—"

"—Blow my brains out, correct? I know, I know. I have faith in the effectiveness of my plan. Just make sure you don't let the cat out of the bag and confess to Dar mid-way through, sobbing 'Gege is so sorry,' or something like that."

"I won't!"

Avery's doubtful expression struck Devon like a physical blow.

"I won't, probably..."

\*\*\*\*\*

In the morning, when the time came to head to school, Ezart did not make an appearance. Dark Sun waited for 20 minutes, but Ezart still did not turn up. After a while, Dark Sun reasoned that since Ezart had fought in the arena until late the previous night, perhaps he wouldn't attend classes today. So Dark Sun decided to head to school by himself.

As soon as he stepped into the classroom, Dark Sun automatically looked towards his own seat... and spotted Ezart already sitting at his own desk next to it, sleeping so deeply that he produced a symphony of snores.

Dark Sun's footsteps slowed for a moment, but he still went to his own seat, and without disturbing Ezart's nap, he simply opened his backpack and put the materials he needed for class on the desk.

Today the classroom was also extremely quiet. All of the students were as well-behaved as they were yesterday. On closer inspection, one could see their gazes continuously drifting towards the window, but today the view outside the window appeared to be as peaceful as the inside of the classroom.

Not much time had passed before the bell rang, indicating the beginning of class. The teacher stood at the doorway and poked his head in, sizing up the overall situation and determining whether or not to have class today. The students today were as well-behaved as before, but there was no wailing female student at the window this time.

When the teacher stepped up to the podium, exchanging meaningful looks with the students, he suggested carefully, "Let's start class first and see how things play out; later we can decide whether or not to end class early. Is that okay with everyone?"

The students nodded simultaneously. Most likely this was the first time they had ever shown this much respect to a teacher.

The teacher took out a textbook from his briefcase. "All right then, now let's start the combat history class," he declared. "First let's read some text. Ac-actually I'll just read it myself. In year 2007..."

Because Eloise was absent, it only took minutes before the students

were unable to contain their impatience. The word 'law-abiding' was not really in their vocabulary. How could they be expected to remain well behaved for an entire class when there was no immediate danger to their lives?

All of the students seemed to have ants in their pants, and one by one they started to squirm. At first they didn't dare to move too wildly and only chatted with the person sitting next to them or sneakily pulled out weapon catalogs from their drawers, handing them to the person at the neighboring desk.

After three minutes...

"Fuck you. A 20% discount? Is there such a thing as discounts for guns? You might as well request free bullets for buying a gun. Collect 10 and get a freebie, damn it!"

"How dare you say that? What kind of price is this, huh? Are you an extortionist? You might as well use your own gun to rob me; that might be faster!"

"You're right about that... Hey! I'm robbing you now—take out your wallet!"

"...Bastard, you think you're the only one with a gun here?"

The teacher hid behind the podium. "Students, gunfights are prohibited during class," he said in a small voice.

And maybe it was because of the excessive strain from the previous day, but it was not long before the classroom became even more chaotic. The teacher did not dare to move an inch from his hiding spot behind the podium, trying to avoid getting hit by a stray bullet.

Even though the entire classroom was in a state of utter chaos, the desks where Ezart and Daren sat were especially clean and tidy. So clean that it seemed that even stray bullets would veer off course to avoid this danger zone.

Since the teacher wasn't teaching the lesson anymore, Daren waited for a moment, then put down his pencil and took out the virtual lover game console from his backpack. Only, he played without expression, as if playing it was just a kind of routine task and not much different from taking notes during class.

Daren had previously been ridiculed when he played his Xiao Ai game console in front of other students, but they hadn't dared to bully him for a while now. Not counting the demon Ezart protecting him, Eloise, who occasionally came to class to whine, was frightening enough. Actually, she was much more terrifying than Ezart. At least Ezart did not publicly announce that he was protecting Daren, and, most of the time, he would probably be too lazy to care if Daren was only verbally attacked.

In contrast, Eloise had actually jumped onto the podium and announced that if even one hair on Daren's head was hurt, then she would make them pay a heavy price.

As for Eloise's recent actions, no one doubted her conviction. It was as if she was wearing a sign saying 'I just want to beat people up'.

"This is an announcement from the Principal's office. Sorry to interrupt the students' lessons. Mr. Dark Sun, Mr. Dark Sun, please report to the Principal's office as soon as possible."

At this time, silence had fallen over the entire class. The corners of their mouths twitched erratically, and they thought together, Dark Sun? When did Dark Sun become a student? Wasn't he 'personnel unrelated to the school'?

When Daren heard the announcement, he slowly lifted his head and pressed Xiao Ai's off button. After he put Xiao Ai back into his backpack, he lifted his bag, stood up, and walked out of the classroom. He did not attract any attention from other people even as he did so. In this class where class time and break time were not the slightest bit different, everyone had always come and gone as they pleased.

Only, in Daren's immediate path, even stray bullets seemed to veer away and take detours, not daring to cross the minefield.

When Daren walked out of the classroom, Ezart slowly lifted his head and looked at his retreating back. Ezart was just in time to see Elan's trio sneakily stalking Daren.

Elan and the others noticed that Ezart was awake and entered the classroom, causing the students who really belonged to the class to flee. They were even afraid to move inside a 10-meter radius around the classroom as they tried to avoid being drawn into what would be the most terrifying battle in the academy.

"Have you also received the Solaris Emperor's instructions?" Elian asked upfront.

Ezart shrugged his shoulders. "Yeah, yesterday night at around 7 or 8. Dar's big bro sent someone to contact me. He told me not to go to school with him, not to speak to him, not to do this and that, and basically to just ignore him! His brother is really so long winded!"

"But this is so hard!"

Eloise was the first to burst out loudly. "Dar is so cute. How can I stand ignoring him? I want to chat with him, I want to give him a hug, I want to pinch his cheeks, I want to..."

Eli covered his ears and tried to hide somewhere further away. He wanted to avoid being bombarded with both Eloise's loud wails and inner thoughts, as she was the kind of person whose actions matched her words.

"Yeah."

Elian and Ezart completely blocked out the shrieking noises. "But what's worrying me is whether or not this plan will really work," Elian remarked, slightly concerned. "What if the plan fails and Dar starts behaving even more coldly?"

"Don't overthink it!" Ezart drawled, rolled his eyes. "Let's just try it! Even if Dar gets mad and decides to beat me up, that's still better than his more-dead-than-alive behavior now!"

Hearing this, Elian laughed bitterly. "What I'm worried about isn't that he'll beat us up. I'm just afraid that if we ignore him he'll decide that we aren't his friends and won't even bother greeting us."

Ezart snorted "Then we'll do the reverse and beat him up," he said coldly. "I just can't believe that that kid would dare to treat us as enemies."

Elian laughed bitterly. He did not share Ezart's confidence. If Dar was completely trapped within the mind-set of Dark Sun, then he couldn't believe in the idea that Dar would never exchange blows with them. Dark Sun was heartless. If one was considered his enemy, it wouldn't be unusual to be killed by him.

At least, that was what Dr. Avery had warned them about.

"I think it's best if I go check it out." Elian frowned. Even though the Principal had only made an announcement summoning Dark Sun, surely the Principal wouldn't refuse to let him listen in.

Eloise stopped her shrieking and nodded vigorously. "Let's go look, let's go look!"

"Going to check on him?" Ezart scoffed. "How poor do you think Dark Sun's level of awareness is? It'd be strange if you weren't found out! If you ruin the plans of Dar's brother, let's see if you can escape with your lives!"

Elian wrinkled his brows frowned deeply. After a long moment, he

released a breath, turned his head to look at Eli. "Eli, hold onto Eloise properly and don't let her sneak off to visit Dar."

Eli lowered the hands that were covering his ears. He walked back towards the rest of them and used both hands to grab onto the hem of Eloise's clothing.

"Let go! Eli, you idiot."

However, Eli did not show the slightest intention of letting go. Eloise glared at him. "Are you my partner or are you Elian's?" she demanded.

"I want to say that I'm Elian's, but, unfortunately, I'm yours," Eli replied coldly.

"..."

To the side, Elian nagged Ezart. "You and Dar are in the same class, so you can pay a little more attention to him. If something really is off about him, then screw the plan! In the end, it won't be good if we really hurt Dar..."

"You're just as annoying as Dar's brother!"

After yelling that, Ezart was too lazy to bother paying attention to Elian any more. He slumped onto the desk and resumed snoozing.

Eloise stood at the side laughing loudly. "Haha! No wonder Dar said

from the very beginning that Elian was similar to his brother! You two really are similar!"

Hearing this, Elian flushed. "...Eloise!" he growled threateningly.

Eloise held her head in her hands and screamed "Eli, Elian's going to hit me!"

"He won't hit you."

Eli said, and explained expressionlessly. "To tell the truth, he really likes it when Dar calls him Gege. He's currently thinking to himself that you've just noticed it, so he's feeling very embarrassed inside. He wants to quickly explain himself using the excuse that he's just worried about the Solaris Emperor's retaliation, and so on."

"... Eli, I think the person El wants to hit now is you."

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v04c02 END \*\*\*\*\*

## Lesson 3: Loathing, other than liking

Translator: LilsXD, Wryn

Proofreader: Arc, Wryn

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Dark Sun halted at the door to the headmaster's office. He was no longer dressed as a well-behaved and obedient student. He had changed into red, tight-fitting clothing and jeans. Naturally, he was also wearing a visor to cover his face.

He politely knocked on the door.

Immediately, an abnormally friendly voice called out, "Is that Dark Sun? Come in quickly! Hurry now!"

Dark Sun entered as bidden. The moment he stepped inside, he immediately went on high alert.

The headmaster was not the only one in his office. There were at least 20 more people inside. Aside from the person sitting in front of the principal with his back to Dark Sun, the rest were standing in two rows. The four people standing closest to that person were wearing very formal black suits. The rest were wearing uniforms. Whether it was for battle or exercise, the uniforms looked very easy to move around in. They also carried rifles with formidable firepower on their backs while two pistols hung at their waists.

Dark Sun guessed that they would definitely have knives and other weapons hidden away, but he was unsure whether they were concealed inside their jackets, strapped to their ankles or in the pockets on their thighs. Perhaps they were hidden in all those places.

In other words, these people caused Dark Sun to go onto high alert. All of them were fighters, and they were fully equipped. If they all became enemies for Dark Sun, even he would have a hard time.

Dark Sun stayed put at the entrance.

“Dark Sun! Quickly, come inside! This kid, why are you so scared of strangers?”

Headmaster Antonias enthusiastically waved his hand for him to come in. Seeing that he would not budge, he hurriedly chided him in a soft voice for being afraid of strangers, in case his actions offended the important guest.

Dark Sun refused to move. He could not allow himself to step into a place he regarded as dangerous. He did not care whether it was polite or not.

Antonias’ smile froze in place. He emphasised, “Dark Sun, this is the man that I mentioned to you before. He is the one who possesses the most beautiful voice in the world, Mr. Lance! Have you forgotten? Come over, quickly!”

Dark Sun silently stood at the entrance. He was unwilling to take another step.

Antonias' complexion became blacker than the bottom of a pot.

*Clap, clap, clap!*

Lance stood up and turned around. He wore an ornately styled white suit. Around his neck was a silvery white scarf, and his hair cascaded down past his waist. His skin was as fair as his clothes. If he were to stand under a light, his whole being would become luminous.

He cast a critical eye over Dark Sun, scrutinizing him from top to bottom for a long moment. After he had seen enough, he smiled. In a tone that bordered on breaking out in song, he said, "As expected of someone I've had my eyes on. Hair the colour of the moon, an extremely slender physique and that uncompromising arrogance to further accentuate your detached poise. Ah! Beauty that is unparalleled!"

Antonias' face twitched. Although listening to that made his whole body break out in goosebumps, as long as the VIP was happy, everything was good! As long as he's happy!

Dark Sun critically observed Lance as well. His clothes were rather complicated. It was not suitable for battle and had no areas to hide weapons. The condition of his skin was very good. There were no signs to show that he had experienced strict battle training. After an X-ray examination of him, he found that there was no metal on Lance's body. He was not a modified human. In conclusion, this person did not pose any threat.

As if he was trying to show that he was a friendly being, Lance took the initiative and walked towards Dark Sun with a smile. He lightly and gently sang as he said, "Don't be afraid! There's nothing scary about me! Although my reputation can be a bit intimidating, look! I, as a person, am not scary at all. I'm not scary at all, am I?"

Antonias' face twitched again. Does this guy have to talk as if he is singing? It made goosebumps that had not appeared for over ten years, erupt on his ageing skin.

"How sad. This child is so beautiful yet he is only a subordinate. Ah! Such a pity, such a waste."

After Lance finished his high-pitched speech, he changed to dulcet tones, "Child, do not worry. Even if there is no one to love and appreciate you, you still have me, Lance!"

Once the microchip discerned that Lance was not a threat, Dark Sun did not pay any attention to Lance. However, because of these words, Dark Sun suddenly changed his focus back to him.

Lance saw that Dark Sun was paying attention to him and felt especially good about it. His expression was especially gentle.

However, Dark Sun then took his eyes off of Lance and looked at Headmaster Antonias. He questioned in a business-like voice, "Is the protective service beginning today?"

Before Antonias could even respond, Lance interrupted.

"Such a pitiful child. Are missions the only thing you care about? Are you not able to see the beauty of this world?" Lance shook his head and sighed.

Although he was referring to the world, his hand was placed on his chest, as if implying that he represented the world.

Dark Sun did not have any intention of answering Lance. He kept looking at the headmaster, reminding him that he needed to respond to his question, "Antonias."

Shouldn't you at least call me Headmaster? Antonias muttered in his heart as he answered, "No. Mr. Lance only came to handle some procedures beforehand. Tomorrow will be the official start date. I wanted you to meet Mr. Lance for a bit today."

"I have met him." After Dark Sun finished speaking, he turned around and left. He did not show any respect to those in the room.

Antonias awkwardly said, "Mr. Lance....."

"It's fine." Lance showed a compassionate smile sighing, "I understand. This child is filled with pride and lacks the presence of love in his life. But it doesn't matter because there is music! Beautiful music will definitely change him. In this one month, my music will definitely fill his heart with love."

Antonias arranged his facial muscles back into a smile as he said, "Definitely!"

"Well then, I will see you again three days from now, Headmaster Antonias."

After Lance left, Antonias slumped onto the headmaster's seat. He covered his face and sighed dejectedly. "This is bad. Although on the surface, Dark Sun seems to ignore everyone, he never particularly hates any one person. So why is it that this time he seems to particularly hate this guy? He doesn't even want to look at him..... How is he going to carry out this mission? He won't leave Lance to die on purpose, right?"

At this point, he murmured quietly, "But that guy is really detestable. Even though he seems to try and help others, his words lean towards being more hurtful and stinging.... This won't do. I need Elian to pretend to be Dark Sun's good friend and frequently visit Dark Sun to have a 'chat'. Ah! Ah! I should make him pretend to be Dark Sun's zealous fan that refuses to be more than half a metre away from Dark Sun! Only then will I be able to rest assured!"

Antonias immediately pressed the broadcast button and called for Elian to come.

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"Dark Sun's zealous fan?"

Elian was dumbfounded. For his entire life, he had never been fanatical

about any particular person or thing, how could he possibly act well as a zealous fan? He tactfully suggested to the headmaster, "How about we let Eloise do this?"

"No, we definitely cannot allow Eloise to take this job. She is a genuine Dark Sun fanatic."

The headmaster said in an annoyed tone, "If Lance were to anger Dark Sun, before Dark Sun has even moved, Eloise might've already hammered Lance to death."

Anger Dark Sun? Isn't this the very mission the Solaris Emperor delegated to them? If he really were to infuriate Dark Sun, the Solaris Emperor might even be grateful to Lance.

Elian smiled bitterly as he shook his head. "It is impossible, headmaster. Dark Sun will be impartial to it. It is impossible for him to get angry."

"Nonsense!" Antonias immediately refuted his words, "He hates Lance."

Elian was shaken. He doubtingly asked, "Dark Sun hates Lance? How is that possible?"

"How is it not possible? He refused to even give Lance a second glance."

Elian was doubtful. Could it be that Dr. Avery's hypothesis is correct? That Dark Sun is not completely emotionless at the moment, but is possibly...

If so, I cannot hang around Dark Sun and ruin this opportunity.

Elian quickly said, "Headmaster, it would be better to have Eli shadow them discretely while keeping them in range. His stealth ability is very strong; he won't be discovered by Lance. In addition, I will be following them closely, so if a situation arises, Eli can instantly contact Eloise and me."

Antonias furrowed his eyebrows.

Elian persuaded him further, "If we did this, we could be assured that Lance wouldn't forcefully drive me away, making us unable to protect him or even worse, anger him."

Antonias hesitated, thinking hard. According to Lance's strange personality and powerful status, he really might call his bodyguards stationed outside the school to drive Elian away.

"Okay, follow them as if you were their shadow," Antonias emphasised.

"Yes sir."

Elian solemnly nodded his head. Although he really hoped that Lance could anger Dark Sun, if Dark Sun became extremely mad and clawed Lance to death, that would be bad.

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After Dark Sun left the Headmaster's Office, he changed back into his school uniform and returned to his classroom for his lessons.

As usual, Ezart was lying on his table fast asleep right from the beginning. Even in the afternoon, he only woke up to have two bites of his bread, drink a big gulp of water before laying back down to continue sleeping. He did not even turn to look at Dark Sun once throughout the day.

Dark Sun also did not bother him. He went to the cafeteria to eat by himself.

Today, the trio that usually came to harass him was nowhere in sight.

Afterwards, besides Xiao Ai, no one said a word to Dark Sun. While the lessons were in progress, he obediently took down notes and when the teacher was dodging stray bullets, he played with Xiao Ai.

Why is the bell signalling the end of class still not ringing? The teacher wiped his sweaty brow whilst evading stray bullets.

Why hasn't class ended yet? Ezart lay down on the desk but could no longer sleep despite his best efforts. No matter how good he was at it, he was unable to sleep from 8AM to 5PM! He could not act even if his life depended on it. For him to act like he loathed Dar.... He would rather continue feigning sleep!

*Dong, dong, dong, dong!*

The teacher grabbed his briefcase and emerged from under the table. He flew out of the classroom with a great shout, "Class dismissed!"

While Ezart was still deciding whether he should continue with his pretence of sleeping or get up to say that he was too busy to walk home together, he heard movement from the table beside him. He raised his arm slightly and peeked through the gap, only to see Dar leaving with his backpack.

Ezart was a bit startled as he lifted his head up and watched Dark Sun's silhouette leave the classroom. This guy, he actually didn't even say a word to me? Even if it were Dark Sun, he should have followed the code of conduct, reminding his friend that class had ended and asking if he wanted to leave together.

"Brat, you dare to be angry with me?"

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Dark Sun went straight home. Just as he was about to use the key to open the door, the door was flung open. He saw a happily-smiling, cute face of a boy that would make any person want to dote on him.

"You're back, Dark Sun."

DSII beamed. "Little Dar has prepared dinner, it's really good! Come over and eat!"

"DSII."

"Yes?" The boy tilted his head while looking at him. He revealed a rather puzzled expression.

"You are DSII, not little Dar," Dark Sun answered, expressionless.

Little Dar shook his head strongly. He happily explained, "Gege said that from now on I'll be called little Dar, not DSII. Dark Sun, you must remember that, ok? Don't get it wrong."

"He is your master, not your gege."

DSII smiled as he said, "Gege likes little Dar calling him gege. Thus, little Dar automatically chose to refer to him as gege."

"DSII, revert back to the correct form of address."

DSII paused for a second before he replied cheerfully, "Dark Sun, you don't have the right to give orders to little Dar. Only gege and Daddy Avery have the authority to give orders to little Dar."

This time, Dark Sun was stunned for a few seconds. Then, he stiffly said, "DSII, revert back to the correct form of address or I will judge that you have malfunctioned. For the safety of the master, I will immediately destroy you."

DSII's eyes widened. He was silent for ten seconds before he revealed

an expression with just the right amount of bewilderment and replied, "Brief self-examination completed. The change in the form of address completed personally by the master. Accepting little Dar as a form of address, correct. While the emotional switch is turned on, automatically choosing gege as the master's new form of address, correct. All functions are working normally. Dark Sun, little Dar is not damaged!"

"You're damaged. Suggestion: Destroy immediately."

As the words left his mouth, Dark Sun extended his sharp nails as his hand became akin to a sharp blade. He aimed in the direction of DSII's heart.

However, DSII was not a normal person either. However you looked at it, he was Dark Sun's copy. Although Dark Sun's move was sudden, it was not completely beyond DSII's ability to respond in time. He immediately evaded this attack and simultaneously retreated a few steps to create distance between them.

He warned, "Under intentional hostile attack. Dark Sun, halt your attacks. Otherwise, I will retaliate."

Dark Sun sent another claw his way.

DSII dodged and said, "Dark Sun, deliberately attacked, ignoring warnings. Conclusion: Dark Sun is damaged. Suggestion: Destroy immediately."

After he finished speaking, he also extended his sharp claws and

slashed at Dark Sun, his speed and accuracy on par.

They utilised their superior speeds and engaged in battle. Their body shapes and appearances were exactly the same. They both used the same sharp claws as weapons. They also had the same energised hair strands and were even wearing their uniforms. In addition, Dark Sun's backpack had fallen to the ground a while ago, causing it to be impossible to discern who was who.

Their strength were similarly frightening and they both did not want to cause a disturbance to others. Thus, their battle remained indoors. The living room and entrance hall were getting destroyed beyond recognition

Luckily, the sound proofing system of the house was beyond average. Although the two of them were creating noise equivalent to the demolition of a house, not many people noticed. Although it did not alarm any regular people, as it was the Solaris Emperor's quarters, there were numerous bodyguards hidden around the area who had noticed the commotion the moment the battle started. They immediately reported this to their superiors.

However, they were unable to do anything else.

From the beginning, they had confirmed that amongst the two that were battling, one of them was the target that the Solaris Emperor ordered them to protect with their lives. However, they were utterly unable to determine which was the one they had to protect among the two identical fighters. They could only assume that they both were and thus, could not fire at either.

In addition, going forward to stop the fight was also impossible. The duo's superior skills rendered these specially trained bodyguards speechless. They understood that if they were to enter the flurry, it would mean forfeiting their lives.

As a last resort, just as they decided to throw tear gas, orders arrived from their superiors.

Avery's voice resounded from the phone, "Don't throw tear gas. It doesn't work on them. It will only cause them to perceive you as an enemy. Basically, don't make any moves. Wait for the Solaris Emperor and protect him as he closes in on the two of them."

Avery instructed the bodyguards as he ascended the stairs from his underground laboratory. Before he could grasp the situation at hand, he saw a rock the size of a human torso flying towards him. Just as a scream left his mouth, he was flattened to the ground by someone, avoiding a ghastly death by rock.

After recovering from a bout of dizziness, Avery stood up and assessed the current situation. By then, the person who had pushed him onto the ground had rejoined the battle.

Was it Dark Sun? Or was it DSII? Avery could not tell. But he knew that the most important thing right now was to stop the two cyborgs from destroying the house.

He yelled, "Stop! Dark Sun, DSII! Stop right now!"

The two of them replied in the same format.

“Dark Sun has lost control. There is a possibility of endangering the master. The level of danger exceeds the level of Avery’s authority. Unable to cease battle.”

“DSII has lost control. There is a possibility of endangering the master. The level of danger exceeds the level of Avery’s authority. Unable to cease battle.”

Avery was in a daze. Just who has lost control?

Then, he realised that the most important thing at hand was not who had lost control, but the fact that the rocks and furniture flying around could crush him to death. He quickly ran to the kitchen for cover, discretely peeking out from behind the wall.

“DSII’s battle capabilities are practically on par with Dark Sun!”

Avery did not forget to record the battle despite the chaos. He nodded, “Be it the body or the microchip, they are exactly the same. Apart from the fact that DSII is a robot and has the disadvantage of easily crashing when faced with dilemmas, his battle capabilities are definitely not worse than Dark Sun’s.”

After muttering to himself, he suddenly thought of something. DSII had attacked Dark Sun.

Avery eyes grew wide. Didn’t the Solaris Emperor give an order that he

was not allowed to hurt Dark Sun under any circumstances? However, DSII had determined that Dark Sun was damaged and was capable of endangering the Solaris Emperor and hence had to be destroyed.

Logically, it should crash due to the conflict between the orders of the Solaris Emperor to never attack Dark Sun, and the programmed response to destroy Dark Sun as he posed a threat to the Solaris Emperor. Why is it attacking Dark Sun like this?

Theodore recalled the process of creating DSII...

After discovering the high chances of failure in the creation of Dark Sun, his former employer, the Solaris Emperor's father, was determined to create a backup version of Dark Sun via cloning techniques.

"We can't place all our hope on that useless son," Father said.

Theodore secretly protested on Dar's behalf. Almost all the kids were dead, but this one seemed to have the greatest potential for success. With unwavering determination that surpassed those of adults, coupled with a robust body, he would be a martial arts elite with just regular training, let alone modifications.

Regardless, Dar was far removed from the word "useless".

But the pitifully low ranking doctor had no right to retort. He could only say awkwardly, "I can only create a crude back-up product. I'll have no time to perform refinements."

"I will find someone else to refine it."

Theodore could only concede.

After DSII was created, he made some major adjustments initially. However, after repeated system crashes in situations with conflicting orders, he still could not find a solution to the problem. It was then Dark Sun's situation became critical and he did not have any time for DSII. His employer then transferred it to another laboratory.

Theodore never gave DSII a second thought thereafter, until several days ago, when Dark Sun's situation was at its worst.

There was no way Theodore would attempt a fix via trial and error on Dark Sun, even under the pain of death. If there was even a little mishap with Dark Sun, he would definitely be tortured to death by the Solaris Emperor.

But if he did not conduct test runs, how would he be able to change Dark Sun back to Dar?

Under the dual pressure of the Solaris Emperor's subzero glares and his worry about Dar, Theodore finally recalled that there was such a thing as DSII.

The moment he brought it up, the Solaris Emperor immediately found the laboratory DSII had gone to among his gazillion secret laboratories, arms factories and underworld organisations.

Theodore had told the Solaris Emperor, "The people from that lab are unable to give orders to Dark Sun."

The Solaris Emperor replied with a nonchalant, "Is that so?"

Theodore did not dare to speak any further. He deduced that the personnel from that laboratory did not come to a good end.

"Perhaps someone from that lab has found a way to prevent DSII from crashing?"

Theodore became vexed. If he had realised it earlier, he would have strongly suggested to the Solaris Emperor that the person who had been in charge of DSII could help him devise a way to recover Dark Sun.

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"Theodore! What do I do? What do we do?"

The spaced out Theodore recovered from his daze. When his neck was close to its breaking point, there was no way he could stay unfocused even if he wanted to. Devon was wringing his neck with all his might.

He choked out, "You are the ultimate master. Your order is the most effective. At least DSII will definitely stop! Now let me go..."

Devon dashed out at those words, his bodyguard following suit, using his body as a human shield.

Devon bellowed, "Stop! I order the both of you to stop! Stop!"

One of the Dars ceased attacking instantly and retreated a few steps. But the other Dar flung a punch at the former, sending it flying into the wall, where it collapsed.

"Dar!"

The heartbroken Devon rushed forward. He used himself to shield the Dar lying on the ground as he helped him up.

The injured Dar raised his head and smiled at Devon, "Gege, you're back!"

Seeing this smile, Devon felt a shock. He suddenly recalled that the real Dar no longer smiled. This, this is not Dar, it's DSII...

Devon turned around to see Dark Sun staring at him expressionlessly. However, the moment he turned away, Dark Sun started towards the second floor.

"Stop there!" Devon hastily shouted.

Dark Sun's footsteps faltered but he continued climbing up the stairs to the second floor.

Devon was shocked. Theodore exclaimed, "He, he's not obeying orders!"

Devon remained stupefied. He gazed vacantly at Theodore who was explaining excitedly, "Don't you get it? Because you called DSII "Dar" and then went to help him up, Dar is angry. He's angry! But Dark Sun is meant to be emotionless, incapable of feeling anger and incapable of disregarding your orders."

Devon suddenly understood Theodore, and he hastily asked, "He can get angry, so he, he is Dar?"

Theodore nodded at Devon who was in disbelief. He added, "He attacked DSII, showing that he disobeyed your order to stop attacking, then he disobeyed your order to stop moving, ignored you and went straight upstairs. He is obviously angry! Dark Sun can't get angry, how can a machine get angry? The most it can do is crash. So he is definitely Dar, not Dark Sun."

Devon trembled, "But, but... didn't Dar refuse to turn on the switch for emotions?"

"I think, from the moment you turned it on, he hasn't been able to completely turn it off!"

Theodore shrugged as he explained, "Dar can hide behind Dark Sun, letting Dark Sun control his body, but he is unable to remain completely unaware of sights and sounds. The moment he became angry, he instantly reclaimed control of his body and..."

Bang!

Theodore and Devon looked towards the second floor. That was the door to Dar's room slamming shut.

"He is angry."

Devon could clearly discern it now. He was a mess of discordant feelings. On the one hand he was glad that Dar could still be infuriated, yet on the other, he was a little heartbroken that Dar was furious.

He suddenly swivelled around and said to his bodyguard, "What are you looking at? Hurry up and clean up this mess, and make sure that this debacle was not overheard by others. Do you still need me to personally instruct you on these matters?"

The houseful of bodyguards immediately commenced cleaning up the aftermath. Professionals were contacted, debris was cleared and dismembered furniture removed.

"I have to tell Dar the truth." Devon decided not to let Dar stay angry for too long after some consideration.

"No, you can't," Theodore yelled.

Devon froze on the spot. He turned around, a rigid expression on his face as he stared at Theodore. If the latter did not provide a satisfactory explanation, he was going to die.

Theodore gushed, "Even though Dar did not disappear, if we tell him that we were just acting this way to agitate him, he might never emerge from Dark Sun's shadow."

Devon steeled his heart as he gazed at the door to Dar's room. He walked back down the stairs, asking the good doctor, "Exactly how long do we need to let him stew in his anger?"

"How would i know... only a while!" Theodore changed his sentence halfway through his grumbling as he noticed the Solaris Emperor's intention to order the bodyguards to torture him. "Dar has become so furious he attacked DSII today, so he should recover in a few days!"

I think... Theodore added silently.

Still a few more days? Devon's heart sank but he nodded, still eyeing Dar's door.

Only a few more days...

Seeing his grief stricken face like that of a mourner of the recently deceased, Theodore reminded softly, "If you're worried, you can ask your bodyguard to ask him to come down for dinner."

Devon immediately indicated to the bodyguard at his side to prepare dinner in the pristine kitchen.

Dinner was ready soon after. Under the "infuriate Dar" plan, the duo deliberately seated DSII with them first, took several mouthfuls from the

dishes before allowing the bodyguard to get Dar down for dinner.

The knocks on the door went unanswered despite several attempts. The bodyguard returned to the kitchen, "Sir, there was no answer."

Devon frowned as he instructed, "Enter his room."

Devon sat uneasily as he waited with great difficulty for the return of the bodyguard, only to hear, "Young master is not in his room. The window was open. Young master has left via the window."

His surprise rendered him expressionless. Theodore's jaw hung open. Dar is evolving too quickly! Not only did he learn to fight, get angry, he even ran away from home...

Devon looked inscrutably at Theodore, sending chills down his spine. He grimaced and stammered, "It's still a progression. Ma... machines don't run away from home. So it means that Dar didn't disappear!"

Devon took a few deep breaths and ground out, "Eat. Don't search for Dar. He, he will come back eventually."

He looked uncertainly towards Theodore who nodded his head vigorously in assurance.

"Good."

However, despite his words, Devon could not stomach dinner. He

muttered repeatedly, "Very well, I won't search for Dar. Don't search for him. It's fine to let him be angry for a while longer. In a few days, Dar will smile again..."

Theodore bowed his head as he gobbled down his food, hoping that he could escape back to the safety of his laboratory as soon as he finished his meal. He did not want to be around when the Solaris Emperor went berserk. He certainly could not stomach the latter's penchant for violence.

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After heading upstairs to his room, Dark Sun sat at his desk modifying his guns. The gun he was currently modifying was small, barely the size of a palm. It was also vintage. He gingerly disassembled its parts, cleaned them, added lubricant and replaced the damaged pieces, and so on.

He stopped his machinations within moments, stating flatly, "Abnormal physical status. Initiate self diagnosis."

Blood pressure elevated, tachycardic and tachypnoeic... consistent with physiological changes associated with anger.

Getting angry contravenes the master's order: To be happy.

Find a method for happiness. Dark Sun gave an order to the microchip in his brain.

Seconds later, Dark Sun opened his backpack hanging on the side of his

chair, fished out his love simulation console and credit card, then jumped out the window.

He walked briskly along the streets still in his school uniform. Normally, he would have been accosted by thugs or robbed. Today, however, his lifeless face scared everyone away, regardless of intent.

Dark Sun walked along the route to school and reached his destination within five minutes.

He raised his love simulation console as he walked into the shop, saying, "I want the latest upgrade."

The attendant instantly recognised this preeminent client who possessed the highest level credit card of the Solaris Bank. Today however, he did not bend down and promptly fish out the newest upgrade.

The attendant grimaced, "Eh... My apologies. The latest upgrade is out of stock! It will arrive in approximately one week."

Dark Sun remained silent.

The attendant hurriedly explained, "The upgrade this time is an extremely limited edition. It has the function of producing children. You can play the love simulation and the life simulation simultaneously, it's like a two in one console. That's why it's so popular. You were just one step late. I had two available until lunch time. After that, a client bought both of them. The entire country is out of stock at the moment. I can make an

expedited order for you, but it will take at least two days. I will do my best to get one for you."

Dark Sun remained silent, causing the attendant's heart rate to skyrocket. Although he knew that he must not neglect this client he was only an attendant of a small store. With his limited capabilities, it was even doubtful if he could get his hands on this ultra limited edition within the next few days. What else could he do?

It seemed as if the client was in a bad mood today. His expression was so frigid it resembled a frozen fish. Wasn't he always smiling in the past? Unless he's angry because he can't get the new upgrade? The attendant swore to himself, no matter how limited future upgrades were, he would definitely save one for this client next time.

"I want to look at models," Dark Sun finally said.

The microchip found a solution. Dar was interested in models previously, so perhaps if he took a look, he would be happy!

The attendant heaved a sigh of relief and said, "Certainly. The models are all displayed on the left wall. This catalogue has many more models that are kept in storage. They are too numerous to display. If you wish, I can search it for you right now."

The attendant whipped out a voluminous tome and Dark Sun began flipping the pages, uninterested in those displayed on the wall.

Dark Sun flicked through the catalogue rapidly, the pages fluttering by.

The attendant's smile twitched.

Almost at the end of the tome, Dark Sun suddenly paused at a page, staring hard at an image. It was an image of a man with silver hair dressed in a tight fitting red top and jeans, wearing a visor, wings of copper sprouting from his back as he yielded a massive scythe with a enormous claw holding up the blade.

The attendant started explaining when he saw the object of his fixation. "Oooh, this was brought in by a client whom you almost had a fight with in the store. He drew the design himself and then custom made a model. After that, a lot of other clients also liked this picture. We couldn't say no to their pleas, so we secretly made those for them! If you want it..."

So it was Shain Baylian.

"I don't want it," Dark Sun interrupted decisively and continued flicking through the rest of the pages.

The attendant was stunned. What does this client really want?

Dark Sun remained silent after going through the catalogue. Although his heart rate was gradually approximating his baseline, and his blood pressure was no longer that high, his internal processes still did not produce any happy effects.

Exactly what does Dar need to be happy?

What would make Dar happy?

What does he want?

I want...

Dark Sun raised his head and questioned, "Can I customise a model?"

"Of course."

The attendant nodded as he elaborated, "We have the best sculptors. As long as they have an image, regardless of whether it is a specific plan or an image of a real person, we can create it for you."

Dark Sun nodded. He fished out a photo from the pocket of his school uniform. "This."

The attendant's eyeballs almost fell out of their sockets.

It was a photo of the Solaris Emperor.

In truth, it was nothing unusual. Multitudes of photos of the Solaris Emperor circulated the market. There were even people who specifically collected photos of the Solaris Emperor. What was shocking was that the Solaris Emperor was smiling in this one...

It was a well known fact that the Solaris Emperor was a cold hearted person. Even though pictures of him with a smile on his face existed, they were sneers or polite smiles. There was definitely no picture like this: a

warm and brilliant smile.

He could guarantee that many collectors would be very interested in this photo.

"Can you make a model of this?"

"Certainly." The attendant beamed, "What dimensions do you have in mind?"

Dark Sun raised his thumb, "This big. with an outer shell attached to a necklace. The shell must have a mechanism that allows it to be opened for viewing the model."

The attendant scribbled down his specifications and enquired in greater detail, "Do you have a specific style in mind for the outer shell and opening mechanism?"

Dark Sun paused, "The outer shell to be made with gold in a vintage style. The opening mechanism with a ruby."

"A ruby?"

The attendant's voice shot up by an octave. A ruby for a button? How big a ruby? Three carats? Five carats?

The attendant thought about that Solaris credit card and had no further doubts. His final question was, "Do you have an upper limit on the

budget?"

"No."

Indeed.

\*\*\*\*\* Eclipse Hunter v04c03 END \*\*\*\*\*

Translator: Wryn, Ryuuku

Proofreader: Arc

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Dark Sun walked out of the toy shop, unhappy that he was unable to get his hands on the model as it wouldn't be finished that day. Under the microchip's guidance, he entered the BBQ shop he had visited a few times with Ezart. It was almost 8pm. The dinner crowd had finished their meal, while the late-night crowd had yet to emerge, so there weren't very many people in the shop.

He sat down and simply said to the waiter, "I want a portion of everything."

"Our portions are quite large," the well-intentioned waiter warned, surprised.

"I'll still take a portion of everything," Dark Sun flatly repeated.

Seeing his good intentions rebuffed, he could only rub his nose, cursing in his heart, "May the food bloat you to death and the bill bankrupt you. Wait till you're in urgent need for the toilet, I'll hang the 'Maintenance' sign outside and kill your bladder, too!"

The waiter deliberately ensured that dishes of food flowed out of the kitchen at a rate much faster than usual. His efficiency wasn't better than usual by just a notch or two either. In no time, Dar's table was filled with

plates. They even had to shift several tables next to his to fit all the food. Eventually, Dark Sun was surrounded by a ring of food.

Dark Sun started grilling his meat. His actions were swift and precise. He placed the meat on the grill without leaving a single empty space. After a while, he flipped the meat over and waited a bit more. After all the meat was cooked, he piled the meat onto his bowl before filling the grill with meat again.

Subsequently, he devoured half his bowl of meat, pausing only to raise his head and flip the meat on the grill. He lowered his head again and continued eating. After finishing the meat in his bowl, he would sweep the meat off the grill and into his bowl in one go. Then, he would place meat on the grill again, before lowering his head to eat what was in his bowl....

As a mountain of discarded plates began to stack up, the staff in the shop all stared in shock at their only customer. He repeated these actions again and again as the ring of plates surrounding him rapidly disappeared.

"When my subordinates came back to report to me that you were eating here alone, i couldn't believe it!"

Dark Sun slowly raised his head to look at the person speaking to him. That person was standing near the door and was quite far away from him.

"How unusual. I'm surprised that your brother isn't hiding you away like a precious gem, heh! Daren 'Solaris'." The person spoke to him as he

walked over. Dark Sun stood up and moved into his battle stance.

When he was a few steps away, Shain Baylian stopped in his tracks. In a lazy tone, he asked, "May I please have the honour of speaking with you?"

Dark Sun's expression was cold and he didn't respond. The smell of charred meat wafted through the air from the grill.

"Don't be tense, I only wanted to ask you something. Be assured that I will not hurt you," said Shain Baylian, before laughing at himself, "Ha! I'm afraid I can't hurt you even if I wanted to. Moreover, I didn't bring anyone along with me, and I can't beat you. That should be sincere enough, right? I only want to ask you something!"

Seeing Dark Sun's impassive response, Shain Baylian's heart sank. He coldly said, "It's regarding my father!"

Dark Sun declined outright, "I have no obligation to answer any of your questions."

Shain Baylian was silent. He knew what Daren was saying was true. Daren was really strong and the power of the one behind him was even more frightening. He had nothing to bargain with to make him answer his questions.

"I think this is rather funny, myself... but when I was buying this, I asked the staff and he told me that you haven't bought it yet, so I bought two." Shain Baylian dug through his bag and took out a box. Clearly written on the cover was 'Love Simulation Game Platinum Limited Edition 8.5'.

What on Earth... The surrounding staff's mouths began to twitch up at the corners. Originally, the atmosphere had seemed really tense, as if they were about to start a fight, but now some love simulation game had come flying in out of nowhere?

That thing wouldn't be able to make that cold customer agree to anything, right?

"Okay, give it to me and I will go with you," Dark Sun stated matter-of-factly.

"....."

Even Shain Baylian was dazed for a moment. He had run out of options so he thought he'd just try it, but he never really thought Dark Sun would actually go with him because of a game... It's not like he was trying to abduct a kid!

Dark Sun moved closer to Shain Baylian and took the box from his hands. He simply said 'let's go' and went to the counter to pay the bill.

Only after Dark Sun had paid did Shain Baylian realise that Dark Sun had already left the store. He quickly followed after him.

"Do we need to call the police?" After the two left the grilled meat shop, one of the staff inside quietly asked, "Does this count as kidnapping?"

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Dark Sun easily found a quiet place close by that would be a good place for them to talk. It was the arena where Ezart used to fight; the abandoned sports field. Now, there was no arena competition on. The entire field was dead silent and dark. The only light was from a nearby building just barely giving enough illumination to be able to see the path in front of them. It definitely was a good place for secrets and to silence those who may divulge secrets.

Dark Sun went to the stands and sat down on one of the rows. He opened the box holding the love simulation game and took the thin upgrade disk. He slotted it inside the simulation game console and turned it on.

Shain Baylian followed after and sat down next to him. Once he saw Dark Sun operate the love simulation console, he hesitated. But he still went along and took out his own love simulation console.

The instant he pressed the 'on' button, a girl with neat and straight black hair appeared. She had cat-like green eyes and wore a cool and handsome outfit. She was a beautiful girl that was only the length of an arm.

Shain Baylian proudly said, "This is my Octavia, what is yours called?"

Dark Sun raised his head and looked at the girl in Shain Baylian's hands. He replied, "Xiao Ai."

"What a boring name... Her appearance is probably lame as well."

Shain Baylian was in the middle of snorting when he happened to see that Dark Sun's love simulation console had finished upgrading. Then, a little girl with pink hair and pink eyes appeared. Her eyes and face were round and plump.

He couldn't help but let out a scream. What was with that appearance! It was an appearance that only a paedophile would pick!

Dark Sun addressed his concerns and replied, "Ezart helped me set Xiao Ai's name and appearance."

"What?" Shain Baylian revealed a disgusted face. With disdain, he said, "So that guy is actually a paedophile! How disgusting!"

The two of them started playing with their respective simulated girlfriends.

"How do you give birth to children?"

Dark Sun finished reading the manual but it only talked about getting a boyfriend, getting married and then you'll be able to give birth to children. Such unclear instructions made him at a loss as to what to do.

"That! It's really annoying. You have to choose from one of the social networking options, such as attending more balls and meet a few men. Afterwards, you'll have to date them for a very long time to be able to get married and all that stuff. Only then can you have children."

Shain Baylian glanced at Xiao Ai and warned him, "You set the girl's age to be extremely small and thus she won't be able to get married until she grows older. She could probably at most only be able to go on dates and have a boyfriend but it's impossible for her to have children!"

However, Dark Sun still chose one of the social networking options.

Shain Baylian exclaimed, "Hey! Did you know that two love simulation consoles can become friends?"

"I know." Dark Sun nodded. He remembered everything in the manual from the first to last word, so how could he not know that there was a function like that. It was only that until this moment, he had not met anyone who played a love simulation console that could allow him to use this function.

"Give it to me."

Shain Baylian didn't say anything unnecessary and proceeded to grab the love simulation console from Dark Sun's hands. Then, he joined the ports between the two love simulation consoles.

Initially, they were two separate love simulation consoles, but now they had joined together and become one. There were two girls curiously observing each other.

"Who are you?"

Octavia gave a sidelong glance at Xiao Ai and slowly but succinctly

said, "Vulgar girl, didn't you know that before asking for someone else's name, you should first state your own?"

Xiao Ai timidly said, "M-My name is Xiao Ai."

Octavia gave Xiao Aia measuring glance before she unwillingly responded, "Octavia."

Xiao Ai cowered back to the boundaries of her own love simulation console. But then not long after, when she saw that Octavia had taken out some makeup and started applying it to her face, she became curious. She walked over to try and see but she wasn't brave enough to talk to Octavia.

"They don't get along."

Shain Baylian looked at them and came to this conclusion. However, it wasn't really anything surprising. Since from one glance it was obvious that the two girls were completely different people.

They were exactly like Dark Sun and him. It was impossible for them to ever become friends.

"Yeah."

Dark Sun closely watched the two love simulation consoles because the microchip reported that the natural reaction/emotion of anger was slowly going down.

Xiao Ai's love simulation console popped up a few options: What would you like Xiao Ai to do?

1. Play with Octavia 2. Ignore Octavia 3.....

Dark Sun chose the first option. Then, the game revealed more options to choose from.

1. Chat 2. Put on makeup together 3.....

Dark Sun continued and chose to chat.

Xiao Ai asked, "Octavia, can I play with you?"

"I really hate him."

Dark Sun raised his head to look at Shain Baylian. The last few words were spoken by Shain Baylian. At that moment, he had already stopped looking at the love simulation console. However, Dark Sun didn't understand who he was talking about.

Shain Baylian didn't explain who this "him" was. He only complained with vigor, "His number of rules for etiquette kept increasing, he liked people kneeling before him and he would suddenly slap people for no reason...."

As Dark Sun listened, he continued to choose options for Xiao Ai.

"What makes me even angrier is that he kept threatening to send me back to my family and dismissing my eligibility as his successor." Shain Baylian was so angry, he was practically shouting.

Dark Sun realised who he was talking about. It was Yue Baylian. Only he could dismiss Shain Baylian's qualification for succeeding the Lunar Alliance.

However, Dark Sun didn't care who Shain Baylian was referring to. He only accepted Shain Baylian's conditions of listening to him talk in exchange for the upgrade disk.

He had taken the upgrade disk and thus, it didn't matter what Shain Baylian was talking about. He would still listen to it until the end.

"He would always threaten me! Dismiss, dismiss, dismiss! Does he have nothing to say to me besides that! I'm only a successor and nothing else?" Shain Baylian yelled in annoyance. He ran out of breath and had to recuperate for a while.

Seeing that he wasn't talking anymore, Dark Sun lowered his head and concentrated on his love simulation console.

Octavia arrogantly replied, "I don't want to play with you! I hate you!"

Xiao Ai sadly asked, "Why do you hate me?"

Shain Baylian dejectedly asked, "I can't help but believe that he hates me."

Dark Sun coldly but straightforwardly answered, "If he hated you, he

would directly annul your qualifications for being the successor or simply kill you. There is no reason for him to let you stay."

Shain Baylian's expression seemed like he was stricken with melancholy. He sat there in shock for a bit as he hid his face between his knees.

Seeing this, Dark Sun continued to play with his love simulation console.

Octavia said in contempt, "Because you look like an idiot."

Xiao Ai retreated back into her own love simulation console and crouched down on the ground as if she was about to cry.

A notification was shown on the love simulation console: Befriending failed.

Would you like to: 1. Try again 2. Fight with Octavia 3.....

Dark Sun hesitated for a moment. Then, he pressed 2.

Xiao Ai immediately jumped up and flew into the other love simulation console. She loudly shouted, "I'm not an idiot! Octavia is an idiot!"

"What did you say?" Without delay, Octavia boiled with rage as her face grew redder and redder.

Hearing the fight within the love simulation consoles, Shain Baylian couldn't help but chuckle, "I really am an idiot as well!"

Dark Sun once again directed his attention towards Shain Baylian. He had earnestly fulfilled his part of the exchange; listening to him talk.

"Every single time. Every single time, he would say that he would dismiss my qualifications of being his successor and send me back to my family. He said that at least one to two hundred times."

Shain Baylian laughed at himself, then continued, "However, he never once really followed along with what he said. What do you think? Why didn't he do it? If he really hated me that much, why didn't he do it?"

"He doesn't hate you," Dark Sun replied with the most basic logical explanation.

Shain Baylian's reaction was extreme/tense. "Then why did he keep saying that he hates me? Why is that when I made a small mistake, he would always hit me and scold me?!"

Dark Sun fell silent, as he didn't know why either.

Shain Baylian suddenly jumped up, and shouted at the sky, "You bastard, do you have to be so annoying?"

"Sharp tongued, soft hearted bastard!"

"You clearly like the Solaris Emperor to death, yet you kept insulting him, making a mess of everything, you big idiot!"

Dark Sun lifted his head to look at him.

Although Shain Baylian was no longer shouting, he didn't look down at Dark Sun, but kept his gaze lifted to the starry sky.

Maybe it was because the sports arena was so dark that the night sky seemed to hold more stars than usual. Dark Sun could even see one sparkling on Shain Baylian's cheek.

Shain Baylian was silent. Dark Sun should've lowered his head to continue playing the love simulator, but not knowing why, he kept staring at the star on Shain Baylian's cheek, unable to look away.

Shain Baylian asked quietly, "My father...Is he still alive?"

Not allowing Dark Sun to answer, he quickly added, "I know, you announced his death, but I want to personally hear you say it. I want to hear the Solaris Emperor's little brother say it. Is my father really dead?"

Dark Sun paused for a while, before answering straightforwardly, "He's dead."

At that, Shain Baylian also stayed silent for a while, then opened his mouth to ask, "Who...The person who killed him, was it the Solaris Emperor?"

"It was me," Dark Sun answered again. Although he should have framed some unknown bodyguard, he still chose to speak the truth.

Shain Baylian lapsed into a longer silence. In the end, he wiped his face with his hand, and turned around, looking down on Dark Sun from high above, declaring, "Starting from tomorrow, we are enemies. I know I can barely even touch you; you're very strong. You're also the treasure of the Solaris Emperor...But I will use my entire life, use my entire life's hard work, and I will definitely kill you! In order to avenge my father!"

"But didn't you hate him?" Dark Sun blurted out.

Shain Baylian coldly snorted. "That's none of your business! I'm allowed to avenge him, aren't I?"

"That sharp tongued, soft-hearted..."

Shain Baylian growled deeply with a red face, "What did you say?!"

Dark Sun lifted his head to look at him, and said, "You're like your father."

"I'm nothing like that bastard!"

After shouting, Shain Baylian panted for a while, then growled, "Anyway, starting tomorrow, you better be careful. I will definitely have my revenge. I. Definitely. Will!"

Kill him now! Prevent any future trouble.

At that moment, Dark Sun's security system activated, his fingernails silently lengthening as he stood up.

Seeing those pairs of sharp nails, Shain Baylian stared coldly at Dark Sun and asked, "You killed my father, are you going to kill me too?"

Dark Sun was taken aback by this question, but he continued to stare coldly at Shain Baylian, looking for the best moment to end his life in a single strike!

Seeing the situation, Shain Baylian furrowed his brow, thinking to himself, Is Daren Solaris really planning to kill me? How could this be? He had originally pegged Daren Solaris as someone who wouldn't attack him, which was why he didn't bring a single person along...Daren Solaris wasn't the kind of person who would kill him.

Although he had killed his father, that was probably to save the Solaris Emperor!

At that point, Dark Sun started to step closer, causing Shain Baylian to step backwards. He had underestimated him, or perhaps, he hadn't looked closely enough at Daren Solaris?

"I don't want to quarrel with you." Octavia? She had turned her head, ignoring Xiao Ai.

"But I want to play with you!" Xiao Ai wouldn't give up.

Octavia hesitated, still reluctant, but clearly sighed, "Alright! You can play with me, but I'm telling you, I hate idiots like you the most."

"Hehe, you won't hate me!" Xiao Ai giggled. "Octavia is really stubborn."

"I'm not!"

Dark Sun's advance slowed. His body was telling him that what he was doing felt disgusting, made him feel sick to his stomach.

Even if he didn't want to, he still had to kill him, he couldn't allow an enemy to live.....

Don't kill him!

Dark Sun's steps faltered, but he still continued to close in on Shain Baylian.

Don't!

Dark Sun continued to move forward, and this time his steps remained steady.

No!

Instead, it was Shain Baylian who stopped retreating, telling Dark Sun, "You're crying."

This time, Dark Sun's footsteps stopped. When he touched his face, it was wet.....how could that be? Dark Sun couldn't cry.

Wasn't the emotion switch turned off? He shouldn't have feelings, so how could he cry?

Seeing his tears, Shain Baylian hurriedly said, "Don't kill me, I still have to avenge my father."

Dark Sun looked at him.

Begging a person you want to kill not to kill you?

Helping someone you hate to seek revenge?

Although the words were full of hate, the actions were full of love!

Dark Sun's voice trembled, "Why are the actions of humans so hard to understand? So hard to learn?"

Shain Baylian stared blankly, then coldly replied, "What a joke, aren't you the same? You're clearly not someone who would kill me, yet you're forcing yourself to kill me; you're even crying. Why are you still forcefully making that cold face? Daren Solaris, don't be an idiot, you won't kill me."

Is Daren Solaris.....the same?

Even though he wanted to smile at Gege, he had to keep Dark Sun's cold expression.

Even though he wanted to enter the toy store, he could only stand rigidly outside because he didn't dare enter.

Even though he loved Gege immensely, really liked Papa Avery, really missed eating late night meals with Ezart, really wanted to chat with Elian and the rest of them... yet because the emotion switch was turned off, he became closed off to everyone.

Touching his face, feeling his entire face covered in tears, he realized he wasn't Dark Sun; he was Daren Solaris, and always had been.

Devon Solaris lifted his head, asking, "Shain Baylian, you said that starting from tomorrow you'll be my enemy?"

"Yes."

"You'll use your entire life for revenge?"

"Yes"

"Then I...Can I stop feeling guilty about killing Yue Baylian?"

"No need to, because I'll make you pay!" Shain Baylian coldly announced, confidently walked past Daren Solaris, picked up Octavia, and left the sports ground. When he was leaving, his back faced Daren Solaris from the beginning to the end, as if he wouldn't do anything to him.

"I allowed someone, who wants to kill me, to go. Why? It's so strange! Perhaps when he comes to kill me, I'll still kill him....."

Daren Solaris lifted his head to look at the starry sky, such a strange self.....Was he more like a human than the Devil's spawn?

\* \* \*

Daren Solaris didn't return home until midnight. He stood in the middle of the entryway and saw a few bodyguards cleaning up in the living room. The mess was now more or less cleared up, only the hole in the wall was still being fixed.

Seeing the current situation, Daren Solaris felt very contrite. No matter what, he was still the cause of all this trouble. Just when he was about to enter the living room, DS II coincidentally opened the secret door, bringing fresh tea into the living room.

Daren Solaris stopped in his tracks in the center of the entrance, a powerful emotion rising within his heart.....

I hate DS II !

He hated how he looked just like him, hated how he could protect Gege, and was even more obedient than himself. He hated how he followed Gege, hated how Gege called DS II , little Dar.....And hated Gege even more for calling DS II little Dar!

DS II looked at Daren, and put down the tea, staring at Daren with his eyes, yet maintaining a smile on his face.

Daren knew DS II has already judged him to be an enemy, and a highly dangerous one at that. If Devon had not given new orders, forbidding DS II to attack him, then they would already have started another death match, and this time DS II would be the first to attack.

The body guards, surrounding the two, tensed.

Unbeknownst to the bodyguards, Daren Solaris had moved to the spot furthest from DS II , which was the path leading upstairs. Kicking the wall, he jumped directly to the second floor.

Everyone present heaved a sigh of relief.

Daren Solaris originally planned to return to his own room, but when he passed by Gege's study, he saw the door was ajar and the overhead light was on.

Is Gege still working?

Could he still be..... looking for me?

From the corridor, Daren Solaris peeped through the open doorway and spotted a head of golden hair spread across the black desk. What was even more stunning was.....Devon Solaris had actually fallen asleep at the table.

It was only slightly past midnight. Usually, Devon Solaris wouldn't sleep till two or three in the morning.

Daren Solaris was a bit surprised. He gently opened the door and entered the study. His actions were very light, hardly making any sound.

He walked slowly toward the desk. Devon Solaris was sprawled over the desk. It was obvious from his tilted face, furrowed brow, and tossing and turning that he clearly wasn't sleeping peacefully.

"Dar..." he mumbled.

Daren was startled. He thought he had been discovered, but looking closer, Devon still had his eyes tightly shut. He clearly had not woken up.

Gege is sleep talking? Gege is calling me in his dream! He was mildly happy.

Out of curiosity, he continued to stand still, listening to Gege sleep-talk.

Daren's eyes widened as he quietly waited, wanting to hear his own name.

"Dar...Sorry, Sor..."

A tear slid down the Emperor's cheek. The sleeping Emperor looked as weak as a child, or perhaps it was only at this moment that he allowed himself to be weak.

Upon seeing this, Daren's heart ached, and he couldn't resist wiping away the tear on Gege's cheek, gently calling out, "Gege..."

Devon Solaris's body reacted quickly, stiffening. His head jerked up as he asked softly, "Dar?"

Oh no! He had been discovered.

Daren's reaction was also quick. He deliberately donned a brilliant smile. He knew that Gege would think he was DS II .

As expected, Devon Solaris paused, and then gave a slightly disappointed expression, unhappily saying, "Oh, it's DS II ! What are you doing here? Go away."

This time around, it was Daren's turn to pause. Doesn't Gege like DS II a lot? He even calls him little Dar. Why did he tell him to go away? And he even used the name 'DS II ', not 'Dar'...

It was at this moment that Devon Solaris discovered he had actually unwittingly fallen asleep. It seemed like he had been exhausted recently.

He furrowed his brow and reached out to massage his temple. As he massaged his temples, he looked at Daren, as if he was wondering impatiently why he was still here.

After thinking for a while, he ordered, "Bring me some coffee."

"Alright."

Daren immediately nodded, and then left the study in haste, running towards the kitchen. He wanted to help Gege by making coffee, to help Gege to relax.

As Devon Solaris watched him rush away, a strange feeling rose in his heart, as he had the thought, Is there something wrong here?

At this point, the door to the study opened and a familiar cute face entered, smiling as it said, "Gege, the living room has been cleaned up."

An odd expression clouded over Devon Solaris's face. It was baffling, but he could remember telling DS II to help clean up the living room, so he tried asking, "DS II?"

"Yes, Gege." DS II jumped out from behind the door, smiling while replying energetically.

Definitely, there is definitely something wrong.

The recently awoken Devon Solaris was a bit confused, and he couldn't

understand what was going on. He paused for a moment before saying, "DS II, bring me some coffee."

"Okay! Gege, how much sugar and milk do you want in your coffee?" DS II asked as it smiled.

Sugar and milk? Devon Solaris finally had a revelation and immediately ordered, "Find Avery immediately. Leave this place right now!"

"Okay!" Upon receiving the urgent order, DS II immediately turned around and left.

Devon Solaris tapped the desk while waiting. Although his face was calm, his finger was speeding up, tapping more quickly...

At last, a knock on the door, and at that very second, the finger stopped tapping against the desk.

Devon Solaris pretended to look down at the documents, and then softly called out, "Come in."

Someone entered, at the same time as the scent of coffee wafted through. That person gently placed the coffee on the table.

Devon Solaris casually said, "Thank you, little Dar."

That person clearly stiffened.

Devon Solaris lifted the coffee, took a sip, and said, "You can go and rest now."

"Understood."

That person stiffly left the study.

After he closed the door, Devon Solaris looked at the door to the study, drinking his coffee as he did so. For the first time in the past few days, he let loose a small smile.

"Dar, your coffee is still the best."

Gege likes little Dar after all!

After he dashed out of the study in anger, he flung himself against the railing, as if itching for another fight with DSII. However, DSII was nowhere in sight.

It couldn't be that he is with papa Avery?

"Papa is mine too!" He shouted before jumping straight down to the ground floor, giving the collective bodyguards a fright. Under the stares of those present, he sat on the only undamaged sofa and pressed the button for basement level two.

DSII was indeed in the basement, helping Avery handle various equipment.

Dar stomped towards DSII in fury. At this moment, DSII noticed Dark Sun's murderous intent and immediately swiped the scalpel from a nearby tray.

Daren unsheathed his steel claws...

Despite their standoff, Theodore remained completely oblivious. He looked at the monitors, jotted down the readings and intermittently frowned at the subject on the laboratory table, as if pondering how to make his next move.

"Guess I should slice off the damaged portion first. It will be bad if it affected the normal parts."

After muttering to himself, Theodore abruptly ordered, "DSII, prepare for an operation."

He hadn't turned around when he gave the order and was completely unaware of the new presence in the laboratory.

Although DSII received the order, he was in a standoff with an extremely dangerous opponent and hence was unable to make preparations.

Just then, Daren spotted the subject of Theodore's experimentation...

"Yue Baylian?" Daren blurted out, so surprised that he lowered his defenses.

It was undoubtedly Yue Baylian, whom he had personally killed, lying on the laboratory table. He did not look dead. In fact, Daren noticed the rise and fall of his chest, covered by a white cloth.

Yue Baylian is alive!

Hearing the gasp, Theodore, who had been solely focused on the subject, finally sensed that something was not quite right. He turned his head around suspiciously and saw two Dars...

Theodore was stunned. He looked at the Dar closer to him, and then at the other Dar further away...

"DSII?" He called out.

"Yes." The Dar, closer to him, answered loudly.

Theodore returned his gaze to the Dar furthest away from him. This was the real Dar.. But why is he here, and with a shocked expression to boot?!

Daren sheathed his claws as he walked towards the laboratory table, gazing at the subject while muttering, "Isn't Yue Baylian dead? I killed him..."

"According to medical science, he is dead."

Theodore stared at Dar for a good while before looking down at Yue

Baylian. He explained slowly, "He has partial brain damage. Fortunately, in order to treat your injuries back then, I brought comprehensive medical equipment and managed to plug him into an artificial life support system in time. That's why he's alive though he's nothing more than a vegetable. But, if I can substitute the damaged portions of his brain with a microchip, perhaps he could fully recover."

"Yue Baylian could return to normal..."

So Shain Baylian might not have to take revenge?

For some unfathomable reason, Daren felt a little joyous. Shain Baylian was the first person whom he had played the love simulation with. Moreover, he had let Shain Baylian off. He did not want to have to personally kill Shain Baylian if possible. He felt extremely uncomfortable just thinking about the possibility of having to kill Shain Baylian out of self defence.

"However, I no longer have a functional microchip at hand."

Theodore was frustrated. The microchips, originally in his possession, were all destroyed when the Solaris Emperor brought Daren home and preceded to "eternally silence" the rest by burning everything to a crisp in an inferno.

That maniac with a brother-complex completely disregarded the frightening amount of money poured into that laboratory, the impact of the experimental results on the medical, scientific, and martial arts fields, or the potential monetary gains from the resultant technology.

For the sake of protecting Dar's secret, the Solaris Emperor did not even bat an eyelash before he incinerated that laboratory in its entirety.

Theodore was heartbroken, but he did not dare to beg the Solaris Emperor to save at least one microchip... For all he knew, the Solaris Emperor might have pushed him into the burning pit as well.

Due to the total destruction of the laboratory and the lack of a microchip, his hands were tied when it came to Yue Baylian's situation.

However, there was no need to worry now.

Theodore watched Daren, who was looking at Yue Baylian, his expression jubilant at some unknown thought; the corners of his lips gently curving up.

However, he did not notice his own smile.

Theodore revealed a smile as he adjusted his spectacles perched on the bridge of his nose. He said in a nonchalant tone, "Dar, your brother said he wanted to kill me again just now..."

Dar immediately blurted out anxiously, "What? Gege wants to kill papa again?"

He turned to face Theodore, concern and anxiety written all over his face. Theodore on the other hand, looked at him without a shred of worry. He was even smiling.

Daren's expression morphed from concern to puzzlement. After staring at each other for a while, he let out a gasp of realisation before becoming flustered and nervous, unsure of what he should do.

"This child, really..."

Theodore shook his head and said helplessly, "I'd never have thought that the brutish Ezart would be the one to see things the clearest!"

"What did Ezart say?" Daren blinked in bewilderment.

"He said that you were just angry and throwing a tantrum, and that you'd be fine after a while."

Theodore grimaced. It really did return to normal after a while, wasting his efforts of racking his brain for DSII's existence and the Solaris Emperor's mobilisation of personnel in search of the covert laboratory. All these efforts were not as useful as Ezart's remark: "Dar will be fine after a while."

"No wonder you like Ezart so much even though he gives you the cold shoulder. Even Elian and the team don't understand you as well as Ezart, despite all their concern."

Daren looked at Theodore, not fully comprehending, but was extremely curious. Ezart understands me?

"I didn't need to worry about you in the first place," Theodore ruffled Daren's hair as he beamed, "You! You picked a friend who understood you best right from the start."

"Ezart?" Daren hung his head, grumbling, "But he ignored me today and went to school by himself..."

"That's because..." Theodore wanted to explain that that was due to the Solaris Emperor's orders.... Ah! The Solaris Emperor doesn't know that Dar has returned to normal.

"Also, Elian and the rest didn't look for me today," Daren said grievously, tears almost falling from his eyes.

"Ah!" Theodore opened his mouth wide to explain, but had a change of mind. Informing Devon was of the utmost importance at the moment, explanations and such could wait til Devon came down to explain it personally.

He walked over to the phone, "I need to tell your brother that you're fine."

Just as Theodore picked up the receiver, Daren hastily said, "Don't tell gege!"

Theodore paused and replied, "Why?"

"No reason why..." Daren replied sheepishly. He laid eyes on DSII and said petulantly, "Anyway, little Dar is here. Gege is happy enough with

little Dar around.”

He’s acting coy... Theodore smiled bitterly, once again taking his hat off to Ezart.

Theodore initially thought it was improper, but on second thought... Forget it! It’s not too late to tell him on the day when the Solaris Emperor can’t take it anymore and wants me to accompany Dar in death.

Anyway, the Solaris Emperor is not stingy in the use of his BHP09 on my head. Being able to make an Emperor sweat bullets is rather nice.

Theodore shrugged his shoulders and hung up. As he walked towards the laboratory table, he said, “In that case, we’ll let DSII exist for a few more days.”

“What are you talking about, papa Avery?” Daren asked.

“I don’t have a microchip to revive Yue Baylian, remember?” Theodore reminded him.

Seeing the latter nod in understanding, he continued with his explanation, “Before you recovered, I had to experiment on DSII to find a method for you to recover, so we couldn’t touch him. But now that you’re better, DSII has no further existential value. His chip can be given to Yue Baylian after slight modifications.”

Hearing that DSII might be destroyed, Daren was stunned. He looked at DSII, the latter still standing there with a smile on his face.

I still hate DSII. Hate him!

But...

Chapter 4 END.

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## Notes

1. (刀子嘴豆腐心) Lit. Knife mouth tofu heart. Describes a person who would be verbally harsh, but actually very soft hearted.

Translator: Irid (contribution)

Editor: Arc, Lin, Laridae

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The next day, Daren Solaris still didn't manage to meet up with Ezart before school. However, he didn't feel upset. This was because he had already found out, through Theodore Avery, that all of it had been arranged by his brother. His brother had sent men to inform Elia, Ezart and the others that they were to ignore Daren no matter what.

In fact, all of this was for the sake of infuriating him, to force 'Dar,' who had been hiding behind Dark Sun, to reveal himself.

So despite not being able to meet Ezart today, Dar felt quite buoyant. He was in such a good mood that he felt like soaring.

"Okay! Let's fly to school today!" Daren shouted loudly and with enthusiasm.

After making the decision to fly to school, Daren turned around and walked back into the house. He hugged Theodore and said, "Papa, I'm going to school."

"All right." Theodore nodded his head and reminded him again, "Your brother hasn't left for work yet this morning. Do you want to wake him up, and say bye to him now?"

Daren's expression tightened and he snapped angrily, "No! Ask Little Dar instead."

After saying that, he stormed indignantly toward the secret door in the living room and left.

Theodore Avery saw Dar off from the secret door. He did not tell Daren that even the issue of the Solaris Emperor liking DSII was false. Anyway, the Solaris Emperor really did treat DSII as Dar's replacement before, so to say that he likes DSII is not necessarily false!

Retribution, this is retribution! Theodore drank his coffee while sighing in his heart, though he wore a smile on his face.

"Has Dar already left for school?"

Theodore nearly spat out the coffee he had in his mouth. After coughing several times, he quickly raised his head to answer, "Yes, that's right!"

Devon calmly leaned on the railing as he stared at Theodore. Theodore returned his gaze, intending to watch him go off to the study, as per usual, before heading back to his laboratory. Usually, Devon would turn around and return to the study directly, without sparing him a single glance.

However, today the Solaris Emperor's attention seemed to linger on the poor little doctor.

He continued to lean on the railing, his eyes still fixated on Theodore. Though his gaze wasn't annoying, the world's most powerful person was actually wasting his valuable time to stare at him... At least, Theodore couldn't think of any other explanation, other than it being the calm before the storm.

"Well...don't you have to work today?"

Theodore felt so unnerved at being stared at that his skin broke out in goosebumps and chills shot straight up his spine. However, the imposing Solaris Emperor was currently looking right at him, and so he didn't dare turn around to return to his laboratory. For all he knew, he might be struck down once he had his back turned.

"Of course I have to. Recently, I've been worried about Dar's issues. I haven't been able to focus in the office, and work has piled up as high as a mountain."

Despite saying that, Devon Solaris didn't move from the railing, with seemingly no intention of resolving the mountainous pile of work.

Seeing this, Theodore Avery summoned his courage to say, "Then, I'll be returning to the laboratory first."

"Why are you in such a hurry?" Devon Solaris said with a faint smile, "You'll still have enough time for experiments even after having breakfast with me, right?"

Crazy, this is crazy! Devon has really gone crazy.

It must be because he hasn't seen Dar's smile for so long that he turned crazy. Help! I still haven't finished the experiment on Yue Baylian yet... No, no! I haven't brought Yue Baylian 'back to life', so how could I just die like this!

Theodore Avery panicked. When he raised his head to look again, Devon Solaris was still leaning against the railing and looked down at him with a beautiful, God-like smile.

Oh! Dar, your father has let you down...

He truthfully narrated, in detail, to the person above him, "Dar has already returned to normal. Ezart was right, he was only being difficult with you, and that was why he hid behind Dark Sun and refused to come out. There's absolutely no problem with turning on his emotion switch. I believe that from the very start, ever since you turned on the switch, there was no way to fully turn it off again."

After hearing that, Devon finally wiped his smile off and replied indifferently, "Uh-huh."

"You...knew?"

Theodore was brimming with curiosity. The Solaris Emperor seemed to be a bit too calm. As for how much he loved Dar, Theodore was definitely the best witness for that. If the Solaris Emperor had heard of this for the first time, then who knew? He might even have jumped down from the second floor in joy!

Devon raised an eyebrow, commenting, "I found out last night, a little earlier than you."

"So it was like that." Theodore gave a bitter smile. Dar, oh Dar. Just who are you trying to fool?

"Shain Baylian seems to have something to do with Dar suddenly regaining his emotions," said Devon with a frown. He didn't know whether this was a good or bad thing, and 'not knowing' in itself made him very uneasy, especially when it concerned Dar.

"Shain Baylian?"

Theodore thought for some time, before realizing it was very similar to the name of his test subject, Yue Baylian. This person had to be Yue Baylian's son, Dar's classmate.

Though he didn't know how Shain Baylian had managed to drag Dar out from hiding behind Dark Sun, he was even more curious about another matter at that moment.

"How did you know that?"

"Who do you think I am?" Devon Solaris glanced down haughtily, and then said deliberately, "In this whole world, there is nothing that I wish to know that I cannot find out."

There is! That time when Dar ran away from home, weren't you unable to find him? Theodore Avery would never dare say this aloud, but he felt secretly happy. Hehe! I was the one who created Dark Sun's superb skills.

"Also, you actually dared to keep news of Dar's return from me." Devon's tone took on an alarming edge.

Theodore immediately tried to redirect the accusation. "This was Dar's request! He didn't want to tell you about it, so what could I do?"

"Why?" Devon's eyes narrowed dangerously. He couldn't deny that he felt a bit hurt. Dar had kept things hidden from him, and yet he had shared these things with Theodore.

"This..."

Theodore felt a little guilty, rendering him speechless. After all, if one sought out the heart of the matter, the main reason was because he purposely didn't tell Dar that his brother didn't like DSII. Hence, he had let Dar continue to misunderstand his brother.

Devon's face darkened. He said coldly, "It seems like he likes you, his father, more..."

"No, no!" Theodore was almost frightened out of his wits. He understood all too well that within the list of things which the Solaris Emperor hated the most, having the position of 'Dar's favorite person' snatched away from him was definitely among them.

"I discovered his return to normalcy on my own. It wasn't because he took the initiative to inform me. Moreover, he seems to be a bit jealous of DSII. It looks like you have treated DSII too well in the past."

Theodore especially emphasised the phrase 'in the past'. Of course, it was in the past! It definitely wasn't 'afterwards' when Devon pretended to treat DSII well!

Devon fell silent. Regarding the matter of having truly treated DSII as Dar's replacement in the past, he had always felt guilty. Now that Theodore had brought it up, he felt even more upset. Therefore, he completely missed Theodore's guilty expression.

Looking at the Solaris Emperor's depressed look, Theodore tried his best to tie his conscience to a large rock, and then sink it to the bottom of the deep ocean.

Devon Solaris seemed a little tired as he said, "I know. Since Dar doesn't want to tell me, then don't say anything!"

"Uhh...but you already know, don't you?" Theodore Avery reminded him.

Devon Solaris growled, "He doesn't know that I already know he has recovered. That also means that I still don't know he has already recovered, isn't that right?"

Know, don't know, pretending not to know. Aren't you worried that saying such confusing words will get you tongue-tied? This pair of

awkward brothers... Theodore shook his head helplessly.

Devon Solaris said impatiently, "In conclusion, don't butt into this! No matter what Dar wants, I will always give it to him. Even if he wants to be willful, it's fine! Anyway, little brothers will always be willful from time to time."

Is that so?

Theodore Avery shrugged. If he didn't need to butt in, then that was fine as well. Anyway, he would soon be busy with Yue Baylian's experiment. At this moment, he suddenly recalled something important. Hastily, he said, "That's right, there's something that I need to inform you about. I intend to use DSII's microchip to save Yue Baylian."

He felt uncertain while saying this. After all, Devon has once been nice to DSII. Furthermore, DSII looked exactly like Dar. Devon might get angry after hearing that he planned to destroy DSII...

Devon shot a glance at him and casually said, "Oh? Then just do it! Just as well, I'm lacking a secretary, the type that can do everything."

Theodore fell silent for a while, but he couldn't suppress his curiosity and asked, "DSII looks exactly the same as Dar, aren't you reluctant to do this?"

"So what if he looks exactly the same?"

Devon coldly added, "Even if he were a real person and is the same as

Dar, from his appearance right down to his genes—even if his personality is exactly the same as Dar's—did he throw a ball at my face when he was young? Did he wait in that small attic every day, waiting for me to look for him? Did he cry while he hugged my waist, begging me not to leave? Did he make a pinky promise with me, making me swear that I'll protect him, or else I'd have to drink a lot of bitter melon juice?"

Understanding suddenly dawned on Theodore's face.

Devon gave a cold laugh, and expressionlessly answered, "DSII is only DSII. He doesn't share a past with me. He is not my Dar! Since he is not my Dar, then whoever they are, they are all the same. The people who are more useful to me shall stay. Right now, what I lack is a secretary who can do everything, and DSII is not that."

Devon Solaris looked at Theodore Avery out of the corner of his eyes, his utterly emotionless eyes.

"Understood." Theodore gave a nod of his head.

After receiving a reply, Devon turned around and headed towards his own study. However, Theodore's voice rang out behind him. "All the same, I should still tell you that Dar seems to be very happy that Yue Baylian is not dead, and is also looking forward to him being brought back to life."

Devon paused in his footsteps, spun around and yelled, "Then even if you die, you have to bring Yue Baylian back to life! Otherwise, I'll put a bullet in your head, understand?"

"...Yes."

\* \* \*

Daren Solaris furiously burst out from the hidden door. The exit was in a dark alley and he was certain there was no one there. Otherwise, he would have sent out a warning before opening the hidden door.

"Steel Wings, activate!"

Metal unfurled behind his back instantly, forming wings out of the alloyed pieces. To vent his anger, he shot up in flash. Within seconds, he was soaring high in the skies.

His speed was simply too fast. Halfway to school, he actually bowled into a flock of birds, scattering them. The birds had no idea what had just happened, but they circled around the 'especially large' bird which had dispersed their formation as though they were analyzing what he was.

Daren stopped in the air. As he flapped his wings, he studied the birds surrounding him. Uncertain whether it was because he had wings as well or because the wild birds were extremely brave, a few of them had actually flown up beside his face, as if they wanted to touch him.

Daren curiously reached his hand out to pet the birds. The birds avoided him at first, but a few of them did eventually let him touch them. Afterwards, one of them even landed on his hand.

At this, he laughed. After he played a while with the bird in his hand,

the microchip reminded him that he was soon going to be late.

He was going to be late!

He flew in the direction of the school urgently. Several birds actually followed him, and then the rest of the flock of birds tagged along, too. With Daren at the head of the flock, the birds formed a triangular shape as they flew with him. They were all following behind him, as though Daren was their leader.

Seeing the situation, Daren paused to chase them away. However, the birds were not afraid of him at all. They started circling around him again. This made him feel a bit helpless, but he also found it amusing.

He was going to be late!

Daren Solaris felt that increasingly urgent nudge in his head again. He turned around and accelerated, but behind him, he heard the sound of wings flapping furiously... When he turned to look, the birds were still following him.

He stopped his flight abruptly.

The birds flew past him. After flying for a short distance, they realized that something was not quite right. They turned around and flew back again, hovering around Daren's side in circles.

"How stupid. Ahahaha, you silly birds!"

Daren couldn't help but clutch his stomach and laugh heartily.

At this moment, a bird landed onto Daren's shoulder and pecked him, as if urging him to quicken his pace.

Daren looked in the direction of the school and murmured, "All of you should be migrating south for the winter about this time, right?"

However, the school was in the west.

The bird pecked at him again.

\* \* \*

"Where's Dark Sun?"

Elia's face was deathly pale. Right now, it was time for the third lesson, but there was still no trace of Dark Sun. Because of this, the principal had bombarded him with questions for one whole hour. The principal's rage, however, was not quite enough to frighten him. Right now, what he was truly afraid of had absolutely nothing to do with his onslaught.

With a loud 'bang,' the principal's door was suddenly kicked open. Both he and Elia turned at the sound, and the first thing they saw was Eloise's foot.

After kicking the door open, Eloise dashed in energetically. Behind her,

Eli sauntered in at his usual pace. The former immediately started yelling, "I can't find Da...Dark Sun!" She received a sharp pinch from Eli and managed to change her words in time.

Eli unhurriedly explained, "When I called his house, his father said that he left home early to head for school."

"This is so frustrating!"

Antonias suddenly roared, giving the three students a fright. He angrily rounded on the nearest student, spraying him with saliva as he bellowed, "It's a good thing that singing fellow is also late. Otherwise, how am I supposed to deliver a bodyguard to him? If you have a plan, then say it! Elian, where the hell is Dark Sun?"

Elian made a bitter face. How would he know?

This was bad. Originally, he hoped that the reason Dar wasn't here was because he was at home doing a body check-up, brain scan, or something along that line. However, Eli's words had utterly destroyed his hopes.

Dar was really missing.

This shocked, worried, and scared Elian all at the same time. He was shocked that Dar had actually gone missing, worried as to where he had gone and whether something bad had happened to him. He was afraid of... certainly, of the Solaris Emperor's reaction.

Compared to the Solaris Emperor's frozen glacier face, the principal's saliva seemed like a light rain from heaven.

"Find Dark Sun and bring him to me! Right now! Immediately! This instant!"

The ghostly wailing intensified many times over, and the three students simultaneously covered their ears.

At that moment, the sound of someone knocking on the door rang out. However, the door had long since been kicked to one side by Eloise, so that person had only been knocking on the wooden door out of politeness.

Everyone turned their heads towards the door at the same time.

"Da-Dark Sun!" The three students had called 'Da' in unison, and then shut their mouths, and called him Dark Sun instead.

Once Antonias saw him, he went completely berserk, yelling, "Where have you been? Don't you know that today is your first day of work?"

Dark Sun just replied in a flat tone, "To send off a little bird."

Hearing that, Antonias looked towards Elian expressionlessly. The look plainly asked him to translate for him. Elian looked toward Eli by reflex, for mind-reading was his forte.

Eli fell silent for a moment, and then he glanced at him rather dispassionately. He said, "I cannot read Dark Sun's heart, as you should know."

Elian went quiet, and then he hesitantly interpreted this for the principal. "Maybe he had a pet bird, and this morning, that bird unfortunately..."

"Oh, is that so?" Principal Antonias frowned. This was considered pardonable. Who knew this icy extraterrestrial student was a bird-lover? That he was willing to come to work even though his bird had died was commendable. After all, it wasn't very polite to trouble others like this.

Did Dar have a pet bird? Eloise and Eli, who had visited Dar's house countless times, tried their best to control themselves from revealing any looks of suspicion.

Elian nodded his head vigorously. Whether the story was true or not didn't matter. What was most important was that Dar was back, the principal believed it, and the Solaris Emperor's face also wouldn't freeze over!

"Fine, in any case, thankfully that fellow Lance is also late, so nothing major happened."

This was also the reason why Antonias so generously forgave Dark Sun. However, he seemed to have lingering fears as he added, "Just wait here for Lance to come, and then follow him to Class A for lessons together."

Hearing that, Elian asked in doubt, "With Lance's strength..."

"Of course he wouldn't be able to get into Class A."

Antonias replied without any intention of hiding things. "That fellow's fighting ability is good for show, but not practical. If he were to come in and take the exam normally, I would have to consider carefully whether to let him into Class C or not."

Hearing the principal's answer, Elian pondered over it for a moment, finally coming to an understanding.

"The students in Class A will be able to help protect Lance?"

Antonias clapped once, and then said with certainty, "That's right, that's how it is. If it wasn't for the fact that the Elite Combat Section has never had lessons, and a curriculum arranged at the last minute would definitely expose us, I had even considered letting him into the Elite Combat Section for lessons. That way he would have had thirty or more bodyguards so strong they are like aliens."

P-Principal, don't say that the students are like aliens right in front of their faces... Elian forced a smile. At the very least, he comforted himself with the knowledge that he was still an earthling, born and bred.

"Right, Elian, I have already arranged the spot where you and Sin will be lying in wait. It's right next to Class A."

"Me...and Sin?" Elian responded with some difficulty.

"Class B is next to Class A, right?" Eloise interrupted to ask. Recently, for the sake of watching Dar, she had often run to the classroom where the normal class held lessons, and hence she was extremely familiar with it.

Antonias said expressionlessly, "Your news has become outdated. Starting from now, beside Class A will be Elian's and Sin's own private classroom."

"Oh!" Eloise's eyes shone, and she asked in anticipation, "Can I go sneak a peek?"

"If you want to go and be the third and fourth wheel, both you and Eli are free to do so," Antonias answered approvingly. "As long as you all remember to help out when Lance is in danger."

Eloise replied enthusiastically, "Relax, we will only be looking on secretly from the wings. We wouldn't go in and be a third or fourth wheel. We aren't that insensitive, right? Right, Eli?"

Eloise nudged her companions with her elbow, and Eli gave Elian a look of sympathy.

Elian raised both of his hands up high, as he looked towards the sk...the ceiling.

God! To have to work together with a seriously dangerous guy, and that wasn't even the worst part of it! The worst thing was, peeking in on them from the sidelines would be a girl, a girl with an excited gaze...

"My apologies, I am late...oh! What exactly has happened to this pitiful door?"

Everyone turned around to look and saw Lance standing at the entrance, looking over the slanted door. He was wearing a student uniform that had been ironed until it was pencil straight, and he was even carrying an equally new school bag in his hands. As expected, he really did look like a student, except...

His school uniform was white as snow. However, the YeLan Academy's uniform had always been blue and black.

Antonias looked at the snowy-white clothes blankly. Combat uniform? More like a model's outfit!

This kind of sparkling white clothing, whether going on a date, appearing on stage in a fashion show, or even attending a upper class ball—it still wouldn't be disrespectful, but...it was simply unsuitable for combat.

Antonias threw away his pride, wanting to put on a smiling face to flatter him, but realized that it was really too difficult. He could only switch to show a principal's dignity, as he coolly said, "So you made it. That's good. Let Elian show you two to the classroom."

Hearing that, Lance only nodded his head, and then all of his interest and attention went to Dark Sun. He gave a slight smile at Dark Sun, saying, "I have made you wait for a while, sorry about that!"

Dark Sun only nodded his head, and gave no reply.

“Then, shall we work hard and study together?” Lance extended a hand in his overly friendly way.

Dark Sun didn’t take his hand.

The atmosphere became a little awkward in that moment. Elian promptly smoothed things over by reminding them, “Let me take you all to the classroom! Otherwise if we wait too long, class will have finished already!”

Hearing that, Lance withdrew his hand with a slight smile, and his expression was very natural, as though he had already shaken hands and was now pulling back.

“Then we’ll be going ahead first, Principal.”

Elian quickly turned around to bid the principal farewell, and then he led the two out of the principal’s office.

As they were leaving, Lance’s passionate inquiry could be faintly heard. “Dark Sun, how old are you this year?”

There was silence for a few moments, but instead it was Elian’s voice that spoke, “Dark Sun is sixteen.”

"Wow, you're so young! You're even younger than I had thought..."

At this moment, within the principal's office, Antonias suddenly turned around to ask the remaining two students, "Dark Sun is sixteen?"

Eloise and Eli both nodded their heads.

Antonias held his face blank as he asked, "Then did he start learning martial arts in the womb, and so trained for a total of seventeen years?"

"He started when he was seven." Eli had remembered it very clearly. Daren Solaris had said before that he was around seven years old when the modifications on him were started.

"Only started when he was seven? He has only trained for about ten years, and he's already so strong that he doesn't seem human anymore?" Antonias' face twitched, and then he shouted loudly, "Aliens, as expected, they're all aliens! The two of you, go and follow them back to Mars!"

Hearing that, Eli silently walked towards the entrance, and Eloise followed him in a hurry.

\* \* \*

Daren Solaris had a taut expression, pretending to wear Dark Sun's heartless look. Though he felt pity for Eli, who had been working very hard to help smooth things over by talking, he still didn't want to return to being Dar.

On one hand, Daren really didn't like Lance, even if he himself didn't understand why. Lance always seemed to present himself as a nice person, but everytime he spoke, it made Daren feel...as though he had been as though a knife was going in his back.

On the other hand, it was because of the actions of Elian and the trio and Ezart. Who asked them to listen to Gege and purposely ignore him?

Though he knew that Elian and the others weren't exactly in the wrong, Daren still felt indescribably angry. Who asked them to listen to Gege? And Gege...Gege...

"Gege said, that in the future, I will be called Little Dar and not DSII. Dark Sun, you have to remember it, okay, don't call me by the wrong name."

Daren clenched his fists without realizing it. I hate Gege the most!

At this moment, Elian stopped in his footsteps, and turned around to tell the two, "We're here. This is Class A."

"I'm very thankful to you, this classmate with a beautiful heart." Lance gave him a gentle smile.

A beautiful heart... Elian silently gave a bitter laugh. He knocked on the classroom door and then opened it. As he did so, he replied courteously, "No problem. I believe that the principal has already talked to Class A, so you two can go in directly."

Lance gave an elegant nod of his head, and then took the initiative to walk first into the classroom. Once he stepped in, the whole classroom became a sea of dead silence. Even the teacher forgot his lesson.

However, once Dark Sun had also walked in, the entire classroom erupted into all kinds of noise, such as shouts, screams, and the sound of people falling off of their chairs. Every kind of shocked noise that one could possibly imagine echoed throughout the room.

Outside the classroom, Elian smiled humorlessly. It was indeed something to be shocked about. To simultaneously see the most famous singer in the world as well as the most mysterious expert fighter in YeLan Academy, there simply wasn't anything that could possibly be more shocking...other than having a gun put to your head by the one person at the top of the world, the Solaris Emperor.

At that thought, Elian gave a helpless sigh. He once again hoped sincerely that the Solaris Emperor wouldn't find out that his most precious darling brother had actually become someone else's bodyguard.

Elian stayed until the noise in the classroom quietened down before he left. He walked to the classroom next door. Once he opened the door of class B, he saw that all the chairs had been pushed to the furthest wall and stacked up into a haphazard mountain. The desks had been arranged side by side, right in the middle of the classroom. On top of them were piles of tidbits and biscuit packages strewn about. Sin was lying within this whole mess, using a newspaper to cover his face while he snored loudly, dead asleep.

Eliau looked at this whole mess a little helplessly, and then took a deep breath and stepped into the classroom...

"Who's there? Don't think that you can sneak attack me!"

Sin gave a loud roar and jumped up, causing the newspaper on his head to scatter pages everywhere.

"Eliau," Eliau reported his own name.

Hearing that, Sin froze for a moment. After he stared at him, he confirmed that it was indeed Eliau. With that, he promptly lay down again. While he covered himself with the newspaper again, he murmured, "Oh, it's Eliau! I have set up your position, it's that chair by the blackboard. You just sit there, and then use the convenient peephole that the principal has drilled there to survey the situation..just like that. I'm going to sleep."

He watched Sin finish speaking. As expected, once he lay down, he didn't move even a bit. Eliau felt a bit stunned, but still walked to the blackboard, grabbed the chair and sat on it. Once he sat down, the peephole was directly in front of him, not a inch to the left nor right.

He looked at that peephole, and then helplessly gave another sigh. With some difficulty, he tried to make himself feel less embarrassed. "No matter how I look at it, I feel like I'm a pervert peeping on females."

Thankfully, Dark Sun is male... Speaking of which, peeping on a male seems even more perverted? Eliau thought, wondering whether he

should laugh or cry.

**Chapter 5 END**

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Daren was quite unused to being in Class A — the students were so quiet that it was frightening.

Even though the various exclamations that had been heard from Class A at first had been more frightening than those from Class D, his original class, the students quieted down almost instantaneously when needed. In the classroom, there was only the sound of the teacher introducing him and Lance.

It was a strange feeling to stand at the platform and face tens of pairs of eyes in the midst of complete silence. Suddenly, Daren started to miss the noisiness of Class D.

Lance, on the other hand, was perfectly content. He had been smiling at the students below him the entire time. Occasionally, when students expressed awe, he would even wink at them.

But what the students really wanted to look at was Dark Sun. They stared at him obsessively, wearing hungry, fanatical expressions. Compared to the world-class musician, the mysterious expert fighter had much more appeal in a combat academy.

“Well, why don’t you each say a little bit about yourselves?” In the

intimidating presence of those two, even the teacher couldn't help but behave respectfully.

"Sure." Lance smiled at the teacher. He turned around to write a large "Lance" in flamboyant cursive on the blackboard, and then turned back around. Still wearing a charming smile, he said, "Fellow students, I am Lance. Perhaps not many people know my name yet, so I thought that I should write it down for everyone to see."

The students returned his smile. All of them knew of Lance's name.

Lance looked at the welcoming expressions below. He blinked. "It looks like everyone does know me, but even so, I'm an ordinary student now, just like all of you! My only wish is to get along well with my fellow students."

Applause rang out from below, and Lance flashed another graceful smile.

After the applause, the teacher's gaze drifted towards Dark Sun. Surprisingly, there was a sense of reverence in the teacher's eyes as well. He opened his mouth and said, "All right then, it's Dark Sun's turn next."

All of the students turned to Dark Sun, their expressions so fervent like believers gazing upon their god, waiting for their god to exhibit his divine powers.

Daren maintained aloof as Dark Sun. He simply stated, "I am Dark Sun, an ECS student in the middle of a bodyguard mission."

As soon as he completed the sentence, he closed his mouth and did not speak again.

Contrary to his expectations, the students revealed even more worshipful expressions upon hearing such a succinct response. So cool!

"All right, then. You two, please sit."

The teacher gestured toward the center of the classroom, where there were already two empty seats. The principal had specifically instructed the teacher to do this. Basically, they were using Class A students as a human wall, safely surrounding Lance in the very middle. If something did happen, then it would be as if the Class A students had begun actual combat internships early.

Daren sat down, but within five minutes he ran into the first difficulty that he had ever experienced in his entire career as a bodyguard: he didn't know what he should have been doing. Aside from staying alert to his surroundings and waiting for enemies who would appear at an unknown time, it seemed that he had nothing to do.

Should he try to learn? But this wasn't his real class.

Should he strike up a conversation? Ezart wasn't here though, and this wasn't Class D. Everyone was so quiet. No one was roasting meat, arguing, gambling, nor selling weapons, so he thought he probably shouldn't be chatting.

Playing with Xiao Ai...this was immediately vetoed by the microchip. If he took out Xiao Ai, then everyone would know that Daren was Dark Sun.

When Daren became so troubled that he couldn't stand it anymore, the teacher finally took care of his problem. Class A didn't seem to learn about alleged combat history or other similar subjects. After the teacher pressed a few buttons, several animated humanoids were displayed on the blackboard. Each of the figures was demonstrating a different kick in slow motion.

The teacher took out a thin rod and began explaining, gesturing at the figures on the blackboard. "Today I will explain some of the more difficult kicks. Even though combat is currently centered around using weapons, when you are truly completing a bodyguard mission, enemies will often strike first, and aside from your vital points, the target they will be aiming for will undoubtedly be the weapon in your hand. If you don't practice close combat, you can only resign yourself to be trampled on if you lose your weapon.

"Your legs have three times more strength than your hands. In particular, High-speed kicks are capable of dispensing an even greater amount of power. If done correctly, a single, accurate kick will be able to cause your enemies to lose their ability to fight. Now, the students that are on duty today, bring out two dummies."

Two students immediately stood up, opened the classroom door, and brought in push carts containing two life-sized dummies. Some of the parts were marked with red circles and had labels to indicate the primary vital points, secondary vital points, *etc.*

The two students erected the dummies on a spacious platform which

had more than enough room for someone to dance on it.

The teacher took off his jacket and put it aside, then said to the students, "Now I will first demonstrate some of the basic types of kicks..."

A student raised a hand, and the teacher responded casually, "Nn? What's the problem?"

"Teacher, could you have Dark Sun demonstrate these moves?"

The teacher stared blankly at the student for a moment, then cast his gaze upon Dark Sun. The rest of the class simultaneously turned their heads to also look at Dark Sun, who was sitting at the very center of the room. Even Lance looked curious.

Daren was at a loss, but the microchip immediately made a decision—he should refuse. He wasn't really a student in this class, so he did not have to comply with the teacher's commands and reveal his own strength in combat. All he had to do was decline.

He was just about to follow the microchip's instructions when he lifted his head and saw dozens of hopeful gazes fixed upon him...

So hard to decline.

This was the first time Daren had had this kind of feeling. He kept still for a moment, eventually coming to the realization that he was incapable of declining, yet he did not dare to agree. After all, the microchip had made the decision to decline. While the emotion section was turned on,

and he did not need to act in accordance to the microchip's decisions, but he was instinctively afraid of going against its guidance, especially after Theodore Avery's kidnapping.

"Then, may we trouble you to demonstrate, student Dark Sun?"

The teacher was extremely interested in this proposal. He had previously praised Dark Sun's excellent skills in front of the battle simulator in the plaza, and since then, he has been looking forward to seeing Dark Sun's strength in combat with his own eyes. The students. Seeing that Dark Sun had not responded, it seemed to him like the offer was going to be turned down. He felt so anxious that he could not resist opening his mouth to urge him on.

Dark Sun continued to be silent for a while. When everyone started to lose hope, believing that he wasn't willing, he slowly stood up, looked at the teacher, and asked, "What do you want me to do?"

Upon hearing this, everyone's spirits suddenly lifted. Even the teacher couldn't hold back his enthusiasm. He hurriedly answered, "Please stand on the platform and demonstrate the kicks as shown on the blackboard."

Dark Sun stepped onto the platform and studied the moves written on the blackboard. Illustrated there was the most basic upper kick, the side kick to the head, and the roundhouse kick. He shifted his gaze upon the teacher and asked formally, "With how much strength and speed should I execute the kicks?"

Hearing such a precise question, the teacher stared vacantly before replying, "Just use all your strength. These dummies were made from

especially strengthened silica, so they're impossible to break. Furthermore, after you've executed your kick, it will report how much strength you used."

Impossible to break? Daren suddenly had a wild urge to break them all... but that was not allowed! The microchip warned him that this would not only expose his true strength, but could also expose the fact that he'd undergone modifications. Master had once ordered that he was forbidden to reveal the matter of him being a cyborg.

Master... stupid Gege!

Daren's face tensed. He was a bit annoyed, but he still used the strength and speed recommended by the microchip to execute an upper kick, perfectly and accurately striking the side of the dummy's head. The dummy emitted a crisp ringing sound.

"What precise movements!" the teacher praised Dark Sun, and glanced at the number displayed on the dummy's chest. He continued, smiling, "However, the strength and speed could still be improved."

After all the students in the class had taken a look at the number, all of them unexpectedly sighed "oh" in disappointment. They were like faithful followers expecting their god to smite the enemy with a single miraculous hit, but the god simply started an ordinary fistfight, fighting the enemy fairly.

Daren didn't know why, but warmth suddenly spread over his face. That wasn't all—his heart rate quickened. He could not comprehend this strange reaction.

The teacher glanced at Dark Sun. Noticing that something was off about him, the teacher said hurriedly, "There's also the roundhouse kick. This kick requires the most precision. Let's have Dark Sun demonstrate for everyone again."

As usual, the microchip calculated the recommended strength and speed. This time, Daren, whose face was practically burning hot, did not want to follow the microchip's guidelines. He could already tell that if he acted according to its suggestions, the students would definitely be even more disappointed and sigh "Oh" even louder. If that happened, his face would definitely heat up even more!

His flushed face won't result in any substantial injury, but, but... it felt very uncomfortable, but if he was feeling this way, wouldn't it be violating Gege's order to 'be happy'?

Daren finally found a reason not to follow the microchip's recommendation. He would just have to follow the teacher's instruction and use all of his strength.

After thinking things over and finalizing his decision, he planted his feet on the ground, twisted his body, and lifted his leg. In one fluid motion, his foot thudded heavily into the dummy's chest.

Even the teacher, who had been standing off to one side of the platform, felt the gale from the impact. Dark Sun's leg was so fast that no one saw it clearly; they could only see his movement up until his twisting motion. The dummy suddenly emitted a ringing noise, sharper and clearer than the one from before, followed by a strange ripping sound.

Then, in front of everyone, a flesh-colored object shot through the air.

At that point, the audience finally realized that Dark Sun had already finished demonstrating the kick.

The sound of shattering glass rang through the air, followed by a faint thud of an object which seemed to have fallen downstairs.

The entire class turned their heads in unison to look at a gaping hole where the window was supposed to be. Sudden realization set in, and they quickly turned to look back at the dummy which has now lost its upper body.

The expressions of the teacher and the students were identical: eyes wide, faces blank with shock, mouths agape, they stared at what was left of the dummy.

"UNABLE TO CALCULATE STRENGTH AND SPEED-- UNABLE TO CALCULATE-- UNABLE TO--"

The dummy that was missing half its body was like a broken record, continuously repeating, "UNABLE TO CALCULATE--"

After all, the teacher was a teacher; he had experienced many different situations before, so was the first to recover his wits. With a complicated expression on his face, both jealous and admiring, he took a while to express what he was trying to say: "This, this is really just too... amazing! You're simply unbelievable!"

The students simultaneously made an “Oh” sound again, but this time, the intonation rose towards the end. They looked at Dark Sun, wearing awed expressions.

It turned out that his face would burn up no matter what he did!

Daren’s face still felt hot, but this time it didn’t seem as irritating as the one before.

“Ah!”

Elian’s jaw dropped. Dark Sun had sent a dummy’s head flying... there wasn’t anything strange about that. Elian had seen him send real people’s heads flying... no, they were the heads of modified humans!

What Elian was so shocked about that his jaw almost fell was that Dark Sun had blushed! Even though the latter was wearing a visor, Elian could still clearly see that the uncovered part of his face was flushed.

Could Dark Sun blush? He can only use ice-cold expressions and a formal tones, right? But it didn’t matter whether Dark Sun had the ability to blush or not—right now he really was, in fact, blushing!

“Your thoughts are all messed-up.”

Elian paused and looked toward the doorway. Eli and Eloise were standing there, and the former was currently looking at Elian with a scowl.

Upon seeing Eli's expression, Elian felt kind of awkward even though he knew that the other couldn't completely figure out what he was thinking. No matter what, no one would be willing to allow a mind reader to stand right in front of them when letting their imagination run wild.

Eli frowned.

Shoot! He couldn't have read this too, right? Elian wrenched his mind away from that topic and asked, "What took you so long?"

Eloise replied unabashedly, "We were calling Papa Avery, telling him that Dar had already come to school and that he didn't need to worry anymore! When Papa Avery heard the news, he was so happy that he was jumping around and screaming something about the world finally being safe again."

Eli continued explaining: "He also gave us some news. Ezart was right, Daren was just throwing a huge tantrum. There really was no problem about not being able to turn on the emotion section and the like."

Elian froze.

"Actually..." Eli suddenly opened his mouth and said, "When I was in the Principal's office, I heard Daren's innermost thoughts, but he warned me in his mind not to tell anyone, or else..."

Following those two last words, Daren had thought for a long time but still couldn't decide what to do. Eli had nearly followed along with that

train of thought, hesitating about whether he should tell the Solaris Emperor, Elian, and the rest of them.

Subsequently, Theodore told him that he had known long ago. This caused the incessantly worrying Eli to get so angry he'd almost vomited blood.

"So that's how it is, no wonder he was blushing!" Elian jumped up and shouted, "He's not Dark Sun, he's Dar!"

The other two were startled by Elian's yell. They looked at Elian dazedly, not understanding what he'd meant by 'blushing'.

Even Sin yelled, "So noisy!" before turning over and continuing to sleep.

"Let me tell you, just now..."

Excitedly, Elian told the two of them what had happened earlier with the dummy in a systematic and detailed manner. Upon hearing the story, Eloise immediately moved in front of the people and shamelessly took over the chair in front of the peephole. She promptly began wailing, "Oh oh oh! Dar is just too cute when he's blushing!"

"Eloise, quiet down a bit," Eli said leisurely, while staring at her. "You haven't forgotten what Doctor Avery warned us about, did you? We can't let Dar find out we've already discovered he's no longer Dark Sun."

Eloise showed no reaction to this and continued her "Oh oh oh." It was actually Elian who blurted out with surprise and asked, "Why?"

Eli shook his head and said, "I don't know the particulars. I only know that this is what the Solaris Emperor ordered."

Turning her attention back to them, Eloise finally said, "What do you mean you don't know? Papa Avery definitely said that it's just a little game a pair of awkward brothers is playing!"

Hearing this, Elan seemed to be at a loss, but in the end he decided to buy Eli's explanation of not understanding the situation.

"Oh oh oh! Class is over. Lance and Dar are going to eat lunch! I want to go too!" As soon as Eloise had finished speaking, she stood up in a hurry and rushed out of the classroom like a tornado.

Elan stared blankly before realizing that he and Sin were the ones who really needed to catch up to Dar and Lance, as they were the ones who'd been ordered by the principal to help protect Lance. Elan hastily turned back to shake Sin, yelling, "Hurry, get up, Dar and the rest of them have already left the classroom!"

"Dar what? What the hell do you mean!" Sin, however, was very angry.

Elan promptly corrected himself: "The target we're escorting has already left the neighboring area. We need to catch up."

As soon as he'd heard this, Sin tore off the newspaper that was previously covering his head and face and climbed off the desk, looking grumpy.

Seeing this, Elian gave a huge sigh of relief. Fortunately, Sin did count as someone dedicated to his work.

As he walked out of the classroom, Sin muttered, "If I don't hurry and catch up to them, Dark Sun will have already dealt with all the enemies, and how could I let that happen? How could I let him steal the limelight?"

This isn't the right time to be thinking about the limelight, is it? Elian sighed and greeted Eli as he, too, caught up with them.

"Dark Sun, there's something I would like to trouble you with."

As Daren was eating his third different-flavored hamburger with relish, Lance suddenly spoke, his expression extremely sincere.

After chewing and swallowing a piece of hamburger in his mouth, Daren replied simply, "Speak."

Lance pulled out an intricately designed envelope from his chest pocket, saying, "In three days I will be performing in a stage play. This is an admission ticket. I would really like you to attend."

Daren looked at the envelope. At the same time, the microchip in his brain was searching up the meaning of "stage play."

Smiling, Lance said, "Of course, there's a reason why I'm giving you this. These are tickets for special seats! They'd be priceless even on the black

market, but I'm giving you five tickets at once!"

Daren continued to look at him. In any case, Lance loved talking so much that, even if Daren didn't ask, Lance would still answer himself.

Even though he had already accepted the principal's mission and had no choice but to protect someone he hated, what was the harm in giving that person a tiny taste of suffering? Daren thought wickedly.

Even the microchip determined that this was a good choice. If Lance couldn't stand him and put forth a request to switch bodyguards, Daren didn't need to protect Lance anymore and he could continue hiding his true strength.

Although Daren did not respond, Lance continued talking, not paying any attention at all to Daren's indifference. Slightly annoyed, he said, "Someone sent me a rude letter that actually told me to stop this great art. The writer of that letter wouldn't even hesitate to assassinate me in order to accomplish this. Truly an unreasonable situation."

You're so annoying, so what's so strange about someone wanting to kill you? Daren silently retorted.

Lance continued to express his righteous indignation for a while. However, upon noticing that Dark Sun still had not reacted. Troubled by this, Lance reworded his request. "I hope you'll be able to show up and appreciate this incomparably masterful art form while taking care to protect me."

Daren glowered at him. He really didn't want to protect the person he hated outside of the working hours he had agreed to.

"I don't want to..."

"A stage play?"

He was cut mid-sentence when someone used an unusually excited tone of voice and interrupted him, but Daren couldn't get angry by the sudden intrusion because it sounded really familiar to him. He turned to look and found Eloise's face only approximately twenty centimeters away from his own.

Her eyes were sparkling with interest. Tugging on Daren's hand, she said sincerely, "If you're going to watch a stage play, you definitely can't go wearing your uniform or ordinary clothing, so you need to go shopping! Let's go, Dark Sun, big sister will bring you to the department store."

Daren furrowed his brows again. He already had so many clothes at home, and there were more and more signs that Gege's designer would send over a pile of outfits from time to time.

"You can also buy toys at the department store, you know, and I heard that there's even a toy exhibit that opened recently! There are robots, the newest virtual love game, and also lots of super cute dolls!"

Eloise truly understood Daren's weaknesses. Basically, Daren had the weaknesses of a ten-year-old.

Eloise, are you a weird big sister who kidnaps little children...? Elian had also come over. When he heard what Eloise said, he really didn't know whether to laugh or cry. He too knew that for Daren, those kidnapper-like words were so effective they were second only to suggestions to go eat midnight snacks with everyone.

Sin looked at Eloise with a puzzled expression. Using toys to lure Dark Sun? Toys?

Daren continued to keep quiet, neither resisting nor concurring.

This, too, allowed Elian to confirm once more that the person before his eyes definitely wasn't Dark Sun. If he was Dark Sun, he would definitely have replied with a single word, "No," immediately shooting down Eloise's senseless proposal.

"Okay, then it's decided! Today after school, I'll be waiting for you at the school gates!"

Eloise snatched up the admission tickets on the table, then decided the time and place without waiting for Daren to agree. Afterwards, she turned around and called to Elian, "Right, Elian, remember to come with us!"

"Me?" Elian was startled. "What do you want me to go there for?"

Eloise said matter-of-factly, "Because you're going to buy a set of new clothes to give to Dark Sun!"

“Why do I have to be the one to buy clothes for him?”

Elian laughed bitterly. He knew of the Solaris family’s level of wealth, and even if he used up all of the money he could earn in his lifetime, he would only be able to buy the type of clothes that the family, and admittedly himself as well, would never even deign to look at.

“He calls you Elian-ge, you know!” Eloise replied with righteous confidence. “How could you not buy clothes for a cute little brother?”

Elian looked at Eloise suspiciously. She had the rare chance to go shopping with just her and Dar. How could she possibly ask Elian to be the unwanted third guest—and of her own accord?

“Eloise spent the all money she earned buying idol singer merchandise. Not to mention the fact that she can’t afford to buy clothes for Dark Sun, even treating him to a meal would pose a problem for her.”

Eli explained as he walked over calmly.

“Eli!” Eloise growled, flustered.

So that’s how it was. Elian sighed and said helplessly, “So you’re looking for someone to pay, is that right?”

Eli gave a single, affirmative nod.

Eclipse Hunter v04c07

Lesson VII Love, Apart from Scolding

Translators: Raylight, Irid

Proofreaders: Gaiseki, Laridae, Zephynel

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“Why is it that even this fellow is here?”

Not long after the bell for the end of class had rung, a bunch of eye-catching people stood outside the school gates as they waited for the silver-haired young man to arrive.

Eloise was currently looking at the additional large-sized person with her arms akimbo.

Elian gave a roll of his eyes, and said unhappily, “If Dar truly wanted to go to a Chinese opera, who do you think is the first person he would bring along?”

Upon saying this, he saw Eloise glare at Ezart, unwilling to give in. Then, he turned to ask Ezart, “I think you probably don’t have any clothes to wear to a stage play, right?”

Ezart pointed to the tattered uniform on his body, and casually replied, “This one will do!”

Elian looked towards the sky and gave a long sigh.

"Then why is it that Eli is also here?" Eloise gave a glare to her usual companion.

"Uh..."

An awkward expression appeared on Elian's face as he explained, "That's because I also didn't bring much cash on me today, s-so I invited him to come along."

"Pftt! Hahahaha!" As Eloise laughed merrily, she shouted, "Elian is so evil!"

The both of you are about the same, Eli thought silently from the sidelines.

Not long after, they saw Daren walking towards them. It was extremely obvious, for almost the entire school population of students were sneaking glances at him. The windows upstairs were packed full of people, and the students that had originally been in a rush to leave the school suddenly leisurely hung around the school entrance, causing a massive impenetrable jam. The space under the trees in the courtyard became the best gathering spot for observing as well as whispering to each other...

"However, if there's so many people, neither me, Eli, Ezart nor Dark Sun owns a car, so how are we going to the department store?"

Originally, Eloise was even thinking of having three people stick to each other. Elian owned a really large motorbike, and she and Dark Sun could

squeeze in the back seat. She would definitely sit behind Dark Sun, and then tightly hug his waist... Hehe!

"Eloise, your laughter is so indecent," Eli said frostily.

Though Elian owned a vehicle, there was nothing he could do when faced with this many people. He said, "Let's book a taxi!"

At this moment, Daren had reached the school entrance. Once he had stabilized himself, a sports car that was like a red flame stopped exactly at Daren's toes, not letting him walk even a single step more.

Everyone was stunned until the driver walked down and courteously opened the door for Daren. Only then did they confirm that this car had truly come to fetch Daren, and everyone promptly ran to the side of the car.

"Is this car your brother's?"

Elian carefully touched the body of the car. He simply liked it so much that he didn't want to let go of it. This red paint, streamlined body shape, and resounding sounds of the engine, woah! What a beauty!

"It's stolen," Daren replied candidly.

Everyone had a strange expression on their faces. This car is a...stolen car?

However, a stolen car still comes accompanied with a driver? All of them had bizarre expressions as they stared at the professional driver who was wearing a suit with a tie. He had white gloves on his hands and held an expressionless face. They thought, It can't be that even the driver was stolen along with it, right?

However, Daren was not lying either. Initially, when he was going to destroy Yue Baylian's secret laboratory, he had stolen this car from his brother's collection. Afterwards, he had returned it to secretary Kyle. However, what Kyle had told him at that time was that he would help him keep the car and not return it to the Solaris Emperor. Whenever Daren needed to use it in the future, then he just had to come and take it from him.

Of course, the driver should have been sent by Kyle. When he stole the car, the car didn't have something like a driver.

Elian looked at the sports car, and seemed reluctant to part with the car as he said, "Then I'm going to go ride my bike. The four of you can sit in the car. This way, it fits just right."

The space inside the sports car was not large. Not including the driver, the maximum amount of people that they could squeeze in was barely four. Moreover, Ezart alone would take up one and a half seats. Therefore, even if there were actually four people sitting in it, it would still be a tight fit.

No matter how much Elian wanted to ride in this beauty, it was something that would not be able to happen.

Daren Solaris suddenly asked, "Where is your motorbike?"

Elian pointed to the parking lot at one side. His motorbike was a heavy-duty one that had even gone through modifications. Though it definitely couldn't compete at all with the car in front of his eyes, to a college student, it was still a treasure.

"I'll ride your bike. You sit in the car."

Even slow-witted Daren could see how much Elian liked the sports car. Since that was so, he might as well volunteer to ride the bike. Moreover, he was truly interested in Elian's heavy-duty bike. Rather than sitting inside a car, he might perhaps like riding a bike more. It should feel very much like he was flying in the air.

Elian froze for a moment, and then turned his head to glance at the sports car. He was still asking, "Do you have a motorbike license?", but his hand was already digging out the key.

"Nope." Daren's answer was very direct.

His movements delayed for one moment, and the hand that was holding the key froze in mid-air. Frightened, he asked, "Then do you know how to ride a bike?"

"Yes."

"Then that's fine." He heaved a sigh of relief.

"I know in theory." Daren thought about it for while, but he still decided to supplement more information.

In theory, there was no means of transport that he didn't know in this world. Even if it was a space shuttle, he would still know how to operate one in theory. That is because all theory of driving is preserved inside his chip.

In theory... Elian started debating whether he should abandon his bike wifey for the sake of accompanying this sports car beauty for this small stretch of road.

"Chill, don't worry!"

Ezart snatched the keys impatiently and threw them to Daren. Then, he dragged Elian who was shivering from head to toe and gave him a strong shove into the car. He casually added on, "If your bike were to be broken, then tell Dar to compensate you with this sports car!"

"If that is the case..."

Elian touched the leather seats inside the car as though he was touching the skin of a beautiful girl. He was touched to the point of crying. This was the beautiful car that he had never dared to wish for in his entire lifetime!

Eloise grimaced, disgusted at what Elian was doing, and promptly remarked, "I think he's already hoping that Dar crashes his bike so he can

get this car.”

“I am not!” Elian snapped.

Eloise impassively kicked the side of the passenger seat.

“Stop itttt!! Why are you treating her like this! Eloise, you’re so cruel!”

Elian whimpered, cautiously rubbing his sleeve on the part of the seat that Eloise kicked.

Eloise rolled her eyes at him. As she got inside the car, she deliberately slumped on the seat and twisted around with all her weight to upset Elian even more. Eli followed and joined her in the back, while Ezart naturally took the front seat.

When everyone was settled in, Daren walked by and ordered the driver, “Just go where they tell you to go. I’ll follow behind by bike.”

“Understood.”

\* \* \*

The sensation was very similar with flying; the only difference was that traveling by bike was much faster, so to Daren, it felt more fun. The wind whistling past him felt comfortable.

Unconsciously, he broke into a faint smile. So, apart from flying, riding bikes can also be lots of fun!

Dar, you've gone way past the speed limit... We're driving through a city, not a racetrack! Everyone in the car thought of the same thing and broke into cold sweat. They were supposed to be driving ahead with Daren following behind. However, he kept accelerating non-stop, and now it was the sports car trying to keep up with the bike.

WOO-WEE-WOO-WEE!

Oh no! Now even the police have joined the chase... Furthermore, they didn't send only one car after Dar – there were several of them! Everyone in the sports car helplessly watched the police cars alongside them.

Daren was oblivious to the commotion. He was absentmindedly thinking about how he was going to secretly ask Kyle for an awesome motorcycle when he got back.

Meanwhile, inside the car, the driver rapidly pressed a few buttons and spoke, "Some police cars are chasing after the young master's bike on XX road. Dispose of them immediately."

Dispose of them? Could this possibly mean...? Everyone in the car went pale.

"You don't intend on killing those cops, do you?" Ezart asked straightforwardly.

The driver only smiled and answered, "No. We're just gonna put some pressure on the police so that they'll stop ruining the young master's fun."

Immediately after the driver finished explaining, they noticed that the police car near them suddenly slowed down. Its siren stopped wailing, and then it simply turned away and left.

Everyone was stupefied. Eli broke the silence and casually said, "Perhaps, to the Solaris family, there isn't much of a difference between a busy street and a racetrack!"

Despite the considerable distance between the school and the department store, they managed to reach their destination a lot sooner than expected; naturally because of Daren driving way past the speed limit and them desperately trying to keep up. Once they'd parked their vehicles, Dar reluctantly returned the key to Elian, who had just gotten off the car.

Elian looked awfully disgruntled. He snatched the key from Daren, then immediately broke into a scolding. "Dar, you shouldn't drive like that in city streets!"

Daren froze.

"That was very dangerous. There are a lot of cars here in the city, and you never know what could suddenly happen. Even if you can dodge roadblocks and other vehicles, you might still scare other motorists and end up causing an even bigger accident! What made you think you can drive like that in here?"

Elia furiously growled, "Even if you don't get yourself hurt, you should still think about other people's welfare. What if they get injured? What would you do then? Human lives are not things that can be compensated with money!"

Daren lowered his head and accepted all of Elia's fury. He couldn't say anything back because he himself knew that he was in the wrong. With a small voice, he could only say, "Sorry..."

Elia's anger did not subside. He had been in constant panic for the whole length of the journey. Nothing bad had happened this time, but it didn't mean that accidents would not happen in the future.

Eloise broke the tension and stepped in, "Okay, okay! Elia, Dar just didn't understand, that's all. Now that you've taught him, he won't do things like this anymore in the future! Dar is a really good kid, he would never disobey you!"

Hearing that, Elia mellowed-down and looked at Dar with a bit of compassion. The latter had his head hung low – the goggles were in the way and it was hard to see his expression, but looking at how dejected he was, it was obvious that he understood that he was in the wrong. This made him feel even more sympathetic towards Daren. He started to rub Dar's head, but couldn't help but add one more line, "Don't do this again."

"Okay." Daren nodded, his voice choked with sobs.

At this point, Ezart casually slapped Daren on the back and teased, "Heh! You got scolded! Who asked you to drive so fast in this kind of

place anyway. If you wanna ride like that, you should do it in the mountains and drive downhill. Now that's exciting! I'll bring you to those kinds of bike races next time."

The last few lines certainly sounded more like a whisper.

Daren lifted his head, his expression a mix of excitement and curiosity, "Can I? Isn't that forbidden?"

Ezart raised an eyebrow and dismissively said, "Relax! It's an abandoned mountain road, so you wouldn't harm anyone else. The most you could do is get yourself hurt. So, how is it? Are you scared?"

Daren's eyes shone and he quickly answered, "I'm not scared!"

Ezart shrugged his shoulders and laughed heartily as he walked away, while Daren quickly followed. The rest of them could only roll their eyes before following along.

It was Daren's first time in the department store. From the moment they stepped into the building, he had been constantly running ahead of them and touching things here and there. Even when they passed by a cosmetics store, he couldn't help but play with several lipsticks and powders, making the sales lady give him a few rolls of her eyes.

Elian smiled wryly and whispered to the others, "Looks like he's already forgotten that he's still acting as Dark Sun."

Eli explained, "Well, his mind is even more like a child's than before:

extremely pure and naive. He just wants to play with all the new things around him.”

Elian sighed and helplessly said, “If we knew about this earlier when he was pretending to be Dark Sun, we could have brought him to the department store. Wouldn’t it be all fine then?”

“The theme park might have been better,” Eli suggested.

“Okay! Next time we’ll go to the theme park,” Eloise squealed.

Hey! The problem is: Dar has already recovered, okay? Elian rolled his eyes.

“Tch! This concealed weapon doesn’t look half bad!” Ezart exclaimed, as he played with a star-shaped object. The metal surface was polished to perfection, and it looked dazzling.

Daren glanced at it excitedly, and remarked, “Just now I asked the lady about it. Big sister says that it’s a limited edition lip gloss palette!”

“What?” Ezart turned the object in his hands over and over again. This thing is lipstick? No matter how he looked, it appeared to be some sort of dart.

“Do you like it? How about I buy it for you?” Daren eagerly asked him.

Ezart’s face momentarily looked as if he had just stepped on a pile of

dog poop. Did he look like someone who needed lipstick?

"Then, you can lend it to me so I can play with it." Daren's eyes sparkled.

So, in short, you just need an excuse to buy it, don't you? Ezart scowled at him and growled, "Why don't you give it to Eloise?"

"Oh, oh!"

Daren immediately turned around and told the sales lady, "I want this."

The lady at the counter immediately smiled and asked, "May I also interest you with a box of eyeshadow palette?"

She went to one of the shelves and took something out which looked like a Swiss army knife. The surface looked just as shiny as the lip gloss palette before, and it looked very beautiful.

Ezart clicked his tongue in wonder as he said, "The things you have in your shop sure look lethal."

"Yes, our founder is a female martial artist." The lady beamed.

"I want this too!"

Daren's eyes shone even brighter. He urgently asked, "Are there any more?"

"Yes, there are. We have the dagger compact, the arrow lipstick, the pistol hair conditioner... May I ask which ones you want?"

The lady at the counter was smiling so much that her eyes had almost narrowed to slits. Perhaps it was because she rarely met customers who didn't even bother with trying on the product before saying that they wanted to buy it!

"All of them!" Daren felt like buying the lot just by hearing their names.

Elian quickly stepped in to stop him, "Dar, you can't just buy things on a whim!"

"I'm giving these to Eloise!" Daren answered confidently.

"Eloise doesn't use make-up. Even if you buy it for her, there's no point."

Eloise shrugged. She completely held no interest in cosmetics, even if they were made to look like weapons.

Daren looked stunned for a moment, and then his shoulders drooped and his head hung low. Dejected, he whispered, "But I want it... I really can't buy it?"

The little puppy wants a bone again. Ezart coldly looked on from one side. Right now the puppy is wearing goggles, so it didn't have the pitiful watery eyes. It's a sharp drop in effectiveness, but to that guy El, it should

be enough.

Elia's expression immediately softened, and he said, "This... Okay then, but you can only buy one!"

Daren choked and suppressed a sob.

"... Okay, three."

Daren instantly lifted his head back up. He excitedly told the lady at the counter, "I want the dart, the dagger, and the pistol!"

"Okay, thank you for your purchase." The lady smiled blissfully as she bowed to him.

Even the cosmetics section on the first floor of the department store could already make Daren fish out money from his pocket... Elia started to feel uneasy about the toy exhibition.

As soon as Daren received his purchases from the lady, sure enough, he turned around and shouted, "Toy exhibition!"

His interest had completely been piqued.

"Let's go and eat first!" Elia smiled, "Everyone, let's have a Western-style buffet and eat to our hearts' content, okay?"

Elian planned to use food to spend time and keep Daren preoccupied. Besides, in a buffet, the amount of food he eats is up to him to decide. However, he did feel a little sorry for the boss of the restaurant...

Daren nodded and surprisingly didn't object. It was near dinner time anyways and he was also hungry. Additionally, he hasn't been able to have a meal with everyone for a long time.

"Okay!" Eloise shouted, "After dinner, let's go to the apparel store to buy clothes!"

Daren followed up, "And then to the toy exhibition!"

The two of them exchanged glances, then they continued to shout in high spirits as they each pitted against the other, "Oh, oh, oh!"

Elian, feeling as if all the energy in his body had been depleted, said, "He really has, completely and thoroughly, forgotten that he is in the appearance of Dark Sun..."

\* \* \*

1 嘖, a clicking noise to show approval

Translators: Laridae, Rednut

Proofreaders: Sora, Zephynel

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Elian was frustrated to the max. They had originally eaten quite heartily: the food was fresh and delicious, the waiter was cute and friendly, and the restaurant was beautifully decorated. Even though the price was a bit high, just looking at Daren's food portions, it made one feel the price was worth it!

The person paying isn't even you, Eli responded silently in his heart, having heard his thoughts.

Who knew that as he was peeling the shrimp, Eloise was chewing the lobster, Eli was quietly cutting the steak, Ezart was gnawing on a drumstick, and Daren was currently bringing back two big platefuls of food back to his seat...

Suddenly, a burst of gunfire rang out and a crowd of people rushed in. One of them yelled loudly, "No one is allowed to move! Everyone get down on the floor, both hands up in the air!"

The people in the restaurant all froze. Everyone, holding various kinds of food, had their eyes fixed on the same place – the gun-bearing criminals at the door. Then, another burst of gunfire rang out. The guests in the restaurant began to scream and attempted to flee. However, the only door was blocked by the terrorists. In the end, they could only cram into

the depths of the restaurant.

At this time, five guests still sat at their table. In the midst of the chaos, they stood out in particular.

Elian shoved the peeled shrimp inside his mouth and slurred to the people, "Now, now, let's not act rashly and scare them off...Dar, hurry up and eat what you want."

Daren finished the two large plates of food at an alarming speed. Upon hearing Elian's words, he nodded his head and simultaneously finished some more food.

Eloise simply held her lobster and squatted down on the floor to continue eating. Anyway, didn't those criminals want her to obediently get down on the floor?

Eli set down his fork and knife, used a napkin to wipe his mouth, and then squatted next to Eloise.

Ezart impatiently grabbed a few drumsticks, and then sat on the floor and continued to eat.

At this time, about a dozen more criminals walked in, firing machine

guns randomly. It did not take long until they got the situation under their control, and everyone was forced to crouch in the empty area in the center of the restaurant.

It all happened too fast, and even for someone who eats as fast as Daren, it was impossible to finish all the food on his plate. Since there were a few people who had not crouched yet, he had to hold his two large plates in his hands and hide his body among his friends as he worked hard to finish his food.

Although the atmosphere was tense and a lot of people began to sob quietly, there were still five people who didn't show the slightest bit of anxiety, lowering their heads to eat in bitter silence.

"Maybe we won't have to pay now," Eli said wistfully.

"Oh!" Elian's eyes suddenly shone. That meant he didn't have to repay Eli either.

"Dar, give me some."

Eloise finished her own lobster and finding herself still unsatisfied, turned to the side to ask for more from Daren, who was still holding two huge plates of food.

"Okay." Daren readily tossed a crab over.

"I want some too." Ezart reached out and unceremoniously took a piece of cake.

Eloise immediately glared at him, saying, "What's a man eating cake for?"

"Strange, so only women can eat cake?" Ezart took a bite of cake, replying peevishly, "Then are you saying that Dar isn't a man? He's the one who got the cake."

"That's different! Dar's so cute, he's naturally suited to eating cake! You big porcupine-head, why are you eating cake?"

"You..."

"Silence!" the gun-bearing thugs roared.

Despite the warning, these five weren't concerned one bit, but the people squatting next to them were afraid of being dragged down with them and thus glared at them. They also scolded, "Youths don't know what's good for them," "Hurry and shut up," *etc.* They were simply so fierce it was impossible to reconcile this with the previous image of them pitifully sobbing, so the five could only obediently close their mouths.

"What exactly do they want to do?" Elian secretly asked Eli.

"Terrorists only take hostages for money," Eli responded lightly.

Elian laughed bitterly for a moment. "Then forget it, of course we're not scared of them-- but there are too many bystanders here. If we start

fighting now, some people might be hurt. Therefore, this situation should be left to the government to take care of. Let's just be obedient hostages. I think they only want money and won't kill the people here to get it."

Eli nodded, saying lowly, "They just want to get the money and leave. They probably have no intention to kill."

Upon hearing this, Elian felt even more reassured. He even had a "Terrorists, you did well, helping save me from such a large bill and even conveniently preventing Dar from going on a toy shopping spree" sentiment.

Daren ate about a plateful and felt a bit full, so he stopped eating. He gave the remaining half of the plate to Eli and Ezart to fight over.

"Waah! Wah..."

"Don't cry, child, don't cry! Don't be afraid, Mom's here."

Daren turned around curiously. Crouching not far from him was a mother comforting the child holding her hand. Although tears still hung in from the corners of her eyes, she used a gentle voice to tell the child not to be afraid.

So this was...a mother? Daren examined the two curiously.

Perhaps the baby was able to sense the abnormal atmosphere, and cried on and on despite the cooing of the mother. It cried so hard that the once smiley face had turned red from all the effort.

One of the terrorists anxiously stared at the baby at first. Then as the baby cried and shouted louder and louder, he actually pointed his gun at the mother and her baby and screamed, "So darn annoying! Tell him to shut up, you hear me? Or I'll shoot the both of you!"

In a panic, the mother hugged her child, her comforting turning to urging, "Child, darling, don't cry, quickly stop crying!"

Don't cry! Or else you will cause your mother's death! Daren clenched his fist, desperately shouting in his heart.

The infant, however, only cried more loudly.

"Bastard!" The agitated terrorist carried his gun and walked towards them, with a fierce look on his face.

Elian and her friends became alert with stern looks in their eyes.

"What are you doing? Don't cause trouble!" Other thugs saw that something was wrong and hurriedly tried to stop him.

"It's all right."

Suddenly, one of the thugs opened his mouth, and all the other thugs quieted.

This was their leader, Daren decided.

The leader walked steadily towards the mother and the baby with a gentle smile on his face. He mildly scolded his confederates when he passed them. "What's with all this rage? This infant is quite cute!"

The leader walked in front of the mother and reached out his hand to tease the little infant. The infant actually stopped crying, curiously looking at this stranger.

The leader reached out and tried to cuddle the baby. Confused, the mother was not sure what to do at first, but she seemed a little bit more relieved when she saw the smile on his face. Without her realizing, the child was in the terrorist leader's arm. Holding the baby, he leader cooed and rocked the baby as he walked towards the window.

Daren didn't relax one bit. He thought, to become the leader of these vicious thugs, this person definitely isn't some infant-loving good guy.

"Isn't the sky outside pretty?" the leader asked the infant, smiling. The infant giggled.

Danger! Daren's mental alarms went off, and he instinctively positioned himself to react to the slightest sign of danger.

The leader broke the window in one shot, grabbed the baby with one hand, and stuck it outside...

The mother froze, stunned, seeming to not understand what had just happened.

Even the criminals were speechless at their leader's confusing actions.

"Time's almost up, so I'm taking this chance to remind the people below that the things should be ready."

The infant!

Daren watched as the infant was about to be dropped out the window. At this time, however, the microchip warned him not to move. Going to save the infant would alarm all the criminals and lead to greater casualties. Sacrificing the infant to wait for the best time to intercede would save a lot more people.

Besides, at this altitude, he would have to reveal his steel wings to save the infant. At this moment there were too many reporters outside and he would be photographed, thus violating the master's orders.

The microchip reasoned it out very completely. Not saving the infant was the best choice.

At this point, the leader let go. The infant cried out "waah" once.

"My child!" the mother shouted hoarsely.

Daren moved. He quickly rushed to the window, so quickly that the leader didn't even have time to react before he'd already jumped out to follow.

After Daren hugged the baby, they began to feel the power of gravity. The steel wings' activation would still take a few seconds. He needed to buy some time. He immediately inserted his right hand into the department store's wall.

However, he was too heavy. This bit of support wasn't enough to allow him to stop and couldn't even decrease the speed by much. He also had to adhere his soles to the wall, and then, finally the rate of falling began to decrease.

Gunfire!

Daren heard it suddenly. Although there was only one shot, he heard the gunfire from the place he was before. Surely it wasn't because of his reckless behaviour, right?

Ezart, Elian-ge, and the others were still upstairs!

He was very anxious, feeling that even the Steel Wing's flight was too slow, so he simply began to run up the wall, instantly returning to the roof.

From the transparent window he could see Elian in front of the infant's mother, waving his light sabres to block the terrorist's bullets. Standing next to Elian, Ezart and Eloise also had weapons raised. Eli supported the heartbroken mother.

However, the terrorists had a lot of hostages in their hands. They

pointed their guns at the other people, wanting to stop Elian and the others.

Seeing this, Daren's heart jolted. Placing the infant under his tight shirt and protecting its life securely, he shattered the window.

At this time, all of the gunshots were concentrated on Daren Solaris, but he used the copper steel wings to block most of the bullets and dodged some of the others. Only a few grazed his body, but the harm caused was not substantial.

"Daren says, 'Quick! Take the opportunity to defeat them,'" Eli whispered to the others.

Elian immediately said, "Ezart, the five on the left; Eloise and Eli, the three on the right."

Once Ezart heard "five on the left," he promptly charged toward them. Eloise and Eli had rushed out at the same time as Ezart. Although Elian's directions hadn't left his mouth yet, it didn't matter. Without a doubt, thoughts are faster than words, and Eli had long been "listening" to Elian's instructions the whole time.

Their speed was so fast that by the time the terrorists reacted, the three had already taken out two of the enemy.

Elian was a dual-wielder, a blade in both his left hand and his right, cutting off two enemies' right hands. As they were injured, their guns naturally fell to the ground, and they also collapsed and wailed

incessantly.

Ezart used his fist to send a guy flying, who then knocked into one of his comrades and sent him flying as well.

Because Eloise had come out to go shopping and hadn't brought her meteor mallet, she could only mimic Ezart and use her fists to resolve everything. With one blow, she made one person crash through the restaurant's glass screen and continue to fly back through the restaurant's glass door. He then fell to the floor, unable to make a single sound.

Eli silently appeared behind a terrorist, and then silently stabbed a knife into his body and just as noiselessly returned to Eloise's side.

Although the terrorists were able to realize what was happening when their companions were pummeled down one after another, they still directed their attention to these more-terrible-than-terrorists guys.

Even though they had machine guns in their hands, they were not able to do anything about the team. One by one, the terrorists were defeated.

"Attack the hostages!" The leader, seeing that the situation had gone wrong, immediately shouted.

The terrorists immediately pointed their guns at the crowd, who panicked and screamed at once. Rounds of gunshot echoed in the restaurant, and everyone in the crowd thought they were dead for sure... However, they did not feel any pain after the gun had fired.

They raised their heads and looked up.

A huge silver wing covered them all. Under the wing, a young boy with his face hidden faced them, and blocked all the attacks for them.

"Waah!" The baby was startled by the gunshot and started crying.

"My baby!" exclaimed the mother. She ran to the silver-haired youth and faced him, both terrified and with hope in her eyes.

Daren took the baby out from his clothes, and handed it to the mother. On seeing its mother the baby stopped crying, and crawled eagerly into her embrace.

"Child! Oh, my child!"

The mother looked at her child, unharmed, with teary eyes. Then she looked up at the young boy. The fear in her eyes had vanished, and gratitude and tenderness was all that was left. She spoke softly, "Thank you! Thank you...angel."

Her voice was all too soft and gentle, nearly inaudible in this mess of a gunfight. Yet Daren heard her particularly well. That "angel"...did that refer to him? To think a mother would actually call him an angel...

"Dark Sun!"

Elia's frustrated voice finally snapped him out of his trance. Only then did he realize that Elia was standing behind him and blocking bullets for him using his light sabres.

Daren turned around and looked at the situation. The terrorists should not have been a match for them, but they were constantly forced to stop their assaults and protect the hostages to keep them safe.

Seeing this, Daren retracted his wings. Although the wings were good for blocking all the bullets, its gigantic size would make him clumsy. Also since the liquid metal that formed the wings was coming from his limbs, his bones would become weaker when he had his wings out.

"Elia-ge, hang in there."

"Huh?" Elia felt dumb for a moment, his twin light sabres still spinning to parry the bullets shot at him, scattering them everywhere.

"Plasma strands, activate!"

On hearing Daren's shout, Elia paused for a moment and, out of curiosity, looked over his shoulder... Daren's short hair suddenly lengthened and became more silvery. There was even a white glow emanating from it.

Elia knew what that was. It was Dar's special ability, Plasma Strands. He himself had suffered from this move before, yet... this time it was so long! A little surprised, he stared at Dar's hair as it became longer and longer, and even flailing wildly in mid-air. It seemed as though he was a

demon who came straight from hell!

The terrorists noticed him too. They looked terrified for one instant, and wildly shot a round of bullets...

At this time the plasma strands were even longer than Daren's body. He covered himself with the hair, and as the bullets hit the strands, they instantly vaporized into a plume of smoke.

Target one, locked on; target two, locked on; target three...

Plasma strands, activate!

Daren's strands of hair suddenly grouped into several beams, thin and sharp as daggers. Then, the hair-daggers swiftly rushed out and accurately cut off the right hand of the targeted terrorists. The cuts were almost the same as the ones cut by Elian's double sword.

Some terrorists dodged the first round of the hair strand assault and crazily shot at the strands, yet their attack was in vain. Still, the hair-daggers made some dodging maneuvers and accurately cut down their right hands.

The hair strands were like Daren's clones, extremely fast and mortally dangerous.

A few terrorists who had narrowly escaped from being amputated tried to flee, but when they turned to run they were met with a fist and were sent flying to a wall. They crashed into it and slipped onto the floor

unconscious. Some terrorists were seeing two spinning blue circles, and just when they were feeling dizzy, they would feel a pain in their hands. Only when they looked down did they find out that their right hands were gone.

Soon nearly all the terrorists had lost their ability to fight. The leader sensed that the situation was off and tried to escape through the door, but...

A girl blocked his way and crashed her hands into each other to make a cracking noise. And behind her stood an intimidating, fight-happy big guy, and the forever-silent assassin.

The girl screamed, "You wouldn't even leave a baby alone, you monster!"

The assassin said coldly, "He says, 'What's a baby worth? That baby is nothing but an annoying and useless piece of junk.'"

The leader's eyes widened. He... he did not even open his mouth! How did that guy know what he was thinking?

"Hmph!"

The three showed extremely dangerous, cold smiles and slowly approached the terrorist leader. The leader was so scared he almost wet his pants.

Seeing the three beat up the leader, Elian felt a bit of sympathy for him.

As the leader of a group of terrorists, he made all those efforts to take the department store hostage, and was this close to being able to brag about his accomplishments. In the end, he ran into some students who were even more terrible than the terrorists themselves...

Seeing him as pitiful as this, Elian could not join in beating him up again. Instead, he left to walk around the place and kick the guns dropped by the terrorists into a corner, in case someone who had not yet fallen unconscious picked them up and caused trouble.

Suddenly, he noticed that Daren's long silver strands were beginning to slowly shorten and shorten, and finally Daren became short-haired again. He stood still for a moment, and then suddenly fell straight to the floor with a thud.

"Dar! What happened to you?"

Elian anxiously stepped up and helped Daren up.

"I used up all the energy... I feel so tired! Elian-ge, the rest is left to you. Good night."

With that said, Daren simply turned his head sideways and fell asleep.

Elian did not know whether to be happy or sad...this...this happened surprisingly fast.

"The police are here! Let's run!"

Eli rushed to them and warned in a low voice, "Daren's identity can't be exposed."

Oh no! Elia hurriedly threw Daren to the strong Ezart, and turned to read the escape map on the wall. Frowning, he asked Eli, "Which direction are the police coming from?"

"They are coming from the elevator," answered Eli briefly.

"We'll use the emergency ladder then!" Just as Elia finished, faint yet hurried footsteps could be heard not far away. He immediately turned to crowd and said, "Hurry, let's go!"

They followed Elia and fled at once. Eloise complained while running, "We saved a whole bunch of people! Why are we running away like some outlaws?"

"Imagine the face of the Solaris Emperor when he knows Dar's real identity was brought to light. What expression will he make then?"

Eloise ran faster than Elia.

The group arrived at the entrance, only to see that it was already blockaded by the police. Just as they were worrying about how they could get out of there, Daren came to. Knowing that it was a transportation issue, he made a call to the driver at once.

Everyone smiled bitterly. "Dar, even if it was the driver, he wouldn't be able to make it here..."

A sports car rammed into the door, and the glass shattered and fell everywhere. The sports car made a long braking noise and stopped right in front of Daren.

At this time, the driver got out of the car, and in a neat suit with white gloves on his hands, he opened the door respectfully for Daren.

"..." Everyone stared at the driver. He looked completely a professional safe driver, and nothing like someone who'd just broken through the entrance of a department store.

\* \* \*

Back at the Solaris home, the people who'd just beaten up the terrorists did not look that different from their usual selves that had just eaten a midnight snack. They were also not too worried that the matter about them beating up the terrorists would spread.

In any case, the Solaris Emperor would always keep things on the down-low.

"Dar, good night then, see you at school tomorrow!" With a slight smile, Elian bid farewell.

"Elian-ge..." Daren suddenly stopped him.

Everyone stilled.

Daren bowed his head and asked softly, "Did you guys...already find out I was Dark Sun?"

Everyone was surprised for a moment. This...was finding out so bad? He was still Elia-ge!

"It wasn't me who said it," Eli immediately spoke out to deny it.

Daren looked at Eli, the latter retreated behind Elia, his face wary. Daren snorted and said, "Even if Eli said it, I still wouldn't do anything to you!"

Eli slowly stepped out from behind his companion, expression relieved. He knew Daren spoke the truth. His mind was too straight of a line, very easy to read.

Eli is so dumb, actually thinking I would do something to him, Daren thought with a chuckle.

This brat...Eli revealed a strange expression and unconsciously called Daren by the term Ezart used.

Daren looked at everyone and suddenly performed a huge bow, saying, "I, I recently made a lot of trouble for everyone. I'm really sorry."

All of them froze, then said one after the other, "Dar, it's okay..."

Only Ezart hmped once and said huffily, "You've been an annoyance since the first day."

Eloise immediately retorted, "Even if Dar is a little annoyance, he's a super cute little annoyance!"

Ezart glanced at her peevishly.

A bit sheepishly, Daren asked, "Ezart, will you wait for me so we can go to school together tomorrow?"

Ezart glanced at him. The latter bowed his head, this extremely pitiful appearance...this puppy! He rolled his eyes, tone rushed as he said, "I have to go through here to get to school! If there's an annoying brat who follows, what can I do?"

Pu! Elia and the two others heard this and could not resist laughing.

"All right! I'm going back now."

Ezart's face was a bit stiff. After he finished speaking, he turned away.

"Bye-bye! Ezart." Daren hurriedly and energetically waved good-bye.

Ezart didn't even turn around, only waving back.

Elian said warmly, "Then let's go, Dar."

"Bye-bye, Elian-ge, Eloise, Eli." Daren also waved to the three others.

\* \* \*

"Dar looks to be very happy."

Looking at the image from the monitor camera at the door, Theodore Avery could not help but talk to himself. There was another person in the study, but he was now stiff in the face and stiff in the body, not unlike a dead body, and therefore obviously not for conversation.

"I'll return to my research then."

Theodore pondered for a while. This was an issue between brothers, so he had better not interfere, and should instead get out of the way as soon as possible.

And Devon did not stop him either.

When Theodore came to the living room, he saw Daren coming in too. Hurriedly he told him in a low voice, "Your brother has already known that you are not Dark Sun, and saw what happened at the department store. He's now in the study room sulking. I think you should hurry and apologize, and try to coax him out."

Upon hearing this, Daren also tensed. "Is...is Gege really mad?"

Theodore Avery scratched his face and made an example, "Probably like when you got injured in the past, about that mad!"

Then that was very angry indeed! Daren began to get nervous.

"I'm going to perform experiments first. You go comfort your brother!"

Theodore ran away really quickly. After saying this, he swiftly jumped onto the sofa and sank into the basement.

"Ah! Papa Avery is so sly!"

Daren felt a bit wronged. He looked up at the study and walked upstairs worriedly. He hesitated for a moment when passing the study.

"Oh...if I apologize to Gege tomorrow, it'll be fine."

In the end he cowardly ran back to his own room, and even fetched his clothes and jumped into the bathroom to take a shower – completely an escapist action.

When he finished his shower and got out, wiping his damp hair...

There was someone inside the room!

Just as Daren became alert, he saw a person sitting at the edge of his bed. Although he was back facing Daren, his back was impossible to not recognize for him.

Gege...

"Did you have fun today?"

Devon didn't turn around to face him.

Daren was taken off guard. His brother did not scold him; instead, the first thing he did was ask if he was happy. His anxiety for being chided was immediately gone. He said excitedly, "Gege, I saved a really cute baby today, and the baby's mother even called me an angel!"

Devon turned around.

Daren smiled happily like an angel. "The mother called me an angel!"

Dar...so it was like this? Even though you never met Mom, you still wanted the affection of a mother. Devon could not help but smile. He walked around the bed and came to his brother. Caressing his head, he said mildly, "You were always an angel."

Hearing this, Daren whispered, "But I was only Dad and brother's angel before, I... I..."

Devon fell silent for one second. Then he said determinedly, "As long as you take care of yourself, do not seek to get hurt, and do not see yourself as some robot that doesn't know pain. Gege has no problem if you want to be other people's angel too."

Hearing this, Daren looked up, a little surprised. He shouted timidly, "Gege, i-if you don't like me fighting, I'll be a good boy and stop..."

Devon smiled bitterly. Even if Dar listened to him, it seemed that there would still be many accidents that would force Daren to fight. What kind of joke of fate was it that Dar encountered some terrorists even when shopping at a department store? ...If he continued banning Dar from combat, he might run into even greater danger.

Seeing the skeptical expression of his younger brother, Devon felt he had to defend himself. "Dar, your brother set up so many restrictions only because he was concerned about you..."

"I know." Daren nodded.

Devon said very emphatically, "But promise Gege, you'll definitely protect yourself. If something happened to you, I, I..."

This time, he was unable to say even half a phrase. If something really did happen to Dar, what would he do?

He could not imagine. Devon could only guess from last time on the island when he was heartbroken and nearly went insane when he thought Dar was killed in the explosion. He would not fare well in the slightest

sense.

Daren immediately nodded and said, "Ge, I'll be careful, absolutely very careful!"

Devon patted his little brother's head. In his heart, he suddenly felt a kind of "Didi has grown up" sadness, but there was also inexplicable pride. His little brother had heroically saved an infant today!

Heart filled with proud sentiments, Devon smiled. This feeling wasn't bad!

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After reconciling with Gege and being promised that 'you can do anything you want as long as you don't get hurt,' Daren told him everything: about accepting the principal's five missions where the first one was to protect Lance, then agreeing to go to the Chinese opera a few days later, and finally Eloise wanting to go shopping for clothes which was why they went to the department store and ended up beating a bunch of terrorists. He relayed all his experiences to Gege like a story.

Devon had already known that Dar's experiences would have definitely nothing to do with having a normal school life, but he never imagined that it would actually be this intense... Devon sighed. He had actually been hoping that his little brother would be living as a normal boy in school, but sure enough, it was just all his own wishful thinking. He had been blind and deaf, refusing to see nor hear, naively believing that Dar could live as an ordinary kid.

"Gege, I can continue to protect Lance, right?" Seeing Devon's complicated expression, Daren anxiously added, "I already promised the principal that I would."

Seeing his brother's apprehension, Devon softened his expression to put Daren at ease. However, he was still unwilling of his precious brother protecting that La-whatever. Who the hell was that guy anyways!? What right did he have to be protected by Dar?!

Although things were like this, he wasn't all that angry; a more accurate way of saying it would be, he couldn't get angry.

In times like this, would Dar really ever get to experience even a single day of being a normal teenager?

"Ai!" Devon sighed in desperation. Having no other choice, he patted his brother's head, then emphasized, "Just remember that your life is ten thousand times more important than that what's-his-face punk, got it?"

Gege actually allowed him to continue the bodyguard mission... After the initial surprise, Daren beamed and happily answered, "I understand, Gege."

Upon seeing that smile, Devon's heart warmed. He was about to ask if Didi was hungry, and if he wanted to eat a late night snack...

"He's awake, he's awake!"

Theodore barged in, yelling and jumping wildly.

Devon looked at him emotionlessly, pulling the BHP09 out from his torso holster.

"Gege!" Daren hurriedly grabbed the BHP09, then shouted to divert his brother's attention. "Papa, Papa! What woke up?"

"Yue Baylian!" Theodore's two eyes were shining as he said, "Yue Baylian woke up!"

Devon didn't have much of a reaction to these news, for he'd already been informed about this matter. However, Daren was extremely shocked and blurted, "Wasn't there no microchip?"

Theodore explained, "We used DSII's microchip."

Daren hesitated. They used DSII's microchip? But wouldn't DSII be...

The terrible DSII had disappeared. Yue Baylian, the person whom DSII had killed, had been saved. Logically, he should have been celebrating over this, but he still felt that something was amiss. If he really should have been celebrating, why did he feel such a tightness across his chest?

"Dar?" Devon noticed that his little brother's expression looked troubled and dazed. In any case, it wasn't a happy expression.

"Papa Avery, can you think of a way to save DSII?"

Daren still opened his mouth to ask, though when it came to the word "save," he suddenly felt strangely awkward. DSII wasn't human, so there wasn't really any life or death to speak of, but he couldn't think of any other word to replace it.

Theodore and Devon both fell silent for a moment, Theodore asked curiously, "Why? Didn't you hate DSII?"

Daren himself didn't understand the reason either. He hesitated, saying, "I, I'm scared of the thought that DSII will steal Gege, so I hate him for that. But if DSII dies, I, I wouldn't be happy either..."

He didn't know what to do with himself, being so full of contradictions.

"I won't be taken away by DSII. Dar, what are you thinking?" Devon exclaimed angrily.

Theodore nodded thoughtfully. "It's because DSII is too much like you; no, I should say that DSII is like the you with the emotional switch turned off. Abandoning him would be like abandoning yourself."

After Papa Avery put it that way, Daren truly understood why he had such a strange reaction. He nodded, saying, "I used to be like DSII, but now I'm already more human..."

Upon saying this, he hesitated and glanced sheepishly at Gege and Papa Avery, seeking their approval. He was more like a normal human now, right? Just like how ordinary boys should be, as his brother always talked about.

"Nonsense, you already are human!" Devon's voice almost jumped an octave higher.

Daren smiled, then went on to say, "Then maybe, DSII can also become human..."

"That's impossible!" Theodore dismissed the idea at once.

Daren was momentarily stunned at the sudden rejection. He tilted his head to look at Avery, waiting for an explanation, and sure enough the latter explained: "Dar, you were human to begin with; it's just that you had a microchip implanted in your brain. However, DSII is different from you. He is but a clone, and there has yet to be technological breakthrough which will counter the inherent flaws in their brains, which causes them to be unable to operate smoothly. In the first place, DSII doesn't even have a brain: he only has a microchip."

Theodore slowly explained, word by word, "DSII isn't human, Dar. He's basically no different from the love simulation game you play."

Daren froze upon hearing this. DSII was the same as Xiao Ai?

"Then think of a way to put DSII inside Dar's love simulation game, let it make friends with Xiao Ai, and everything will be resolved, right?" Devon couldn't care a bit whether DSII disappeared or not, but if DSII disappeared, Dar would be sad. Due to this, DSII's continued existence was necessary.

Theodore rolled his eyes. Besides being a doctor and blacksmith, now he even had to become a toy manufacturer?

"Is that okay?" Daren looked imploringly at Theodore.

Theodore hesitated for a moment. He looked from Daren's hopeful expression, then to Devon's deadly eyes which seemed to say, 'If you can't

do it, I'll kill you'. He then responded, "If it will only involve simple functions which do not include fighting or other complicated matters, then no microchip is necessary."

"That's great!" Daren hugged him, cheering, "Papa's the best!"

"Hehe..." Theodore grinned. It seemed like Dar, in his happiness, had omitted the word 'Avery' and directly called him Papa.

Daren laughed and excitedly said, "Then let's go see Yue Baylian now!"

"Oh!"

As if waking up from a dream, Theodore finally remembered his reason for coming here. He quickly turned to Devon and said, "I think he will want to see you. He just woke up. He's mentally unstable and his memories are a bit muddled, so seeing familiar people will help his memory!"

"Mentally unstable?" Devon suddenly revealed an interested smile while his gaze drifted away, appearing as if he was pondering about something.

"..."

Theodore decided to pretend he didn't see anything. Grabbing his life-preserver's — Daren's — hand, he mustered his courage, and said, "Let's go!"

\* \* \*

"His eyes..."

Daren gasped upon seeing Yue Baylian who was lying in bed. When the latter turned to see the people who entered the room, the first thing he saw was Yue's right eye which was completely made of metal.

"It feels like something has changed?"

Devon frowned while looking at the bedridden person who seemed to be in a daze. He looked like he was about twenty-years-old, and was extremely beautiful, but it was hard to tell if he was a man or a woman. He looked more like the Yue Ya-er<sup>1</sup> of Devon's memories; not like the evil Yue Baylian.

"Ah...does it?" Theodore asked guiltily.

Actually, there was. Knowing that the Solaris Emperor wanted Yue Baylian as his second all-around secretary, the latter would definitely have the chance to visit this house often. Since they would see each other often, Theodore had secretly modified Yue's features a little bit while he was installing the eye. It would make him a bit more pleasing to look at, so it wasn't a bad thing, right?

"Are you alright?"

Devon walked to the bedside while wearing a warm smile as he gazed at the person on the bed.

It seemed like the plan for getting Yue Baylian as the second all-around secretary is definite... Theodore got goosebumps when he saw the Emperor's gentle smile. Pulling on Daren, the two moved back several steps, until they reached a far corner of the room.

Yue Baylian stared back at Devon as the corners of his lips curved into a smile. He looked as if he had seen an angel.

"Do you recognize who I am?" Devon asked softly.

Yue Baylian opened his mouth imperceptibly. With a weak but clear voice, he said "Dev..."

As Devon sat on the side of the bed, he asked with great concern, "How do you feel right now?"

"A little hungry and very thirsty." Yue Baylian answered, looking at Devon's movements. As he watched, he felt a little happy, albeit a bit puzzled.

"I didn't know Gege liked Yue Baylian this much!" Daren observed curiously.

"He likes Yue Baylian's work efficiency," Theodore muttered.

Devon gently said, "Then I'll first get you a glass of water, and then I'll tell the chefs to prepare a meal. You're still recovering from a serious illness, so I think you should just eat congee!"

Yue Baylian nodded gently.

"He clearly isn't sick; lying with his eyes wide open2..." Theodore whispered.

Devon stood up and walked over to a corner of the room. He picked the phone up and began to give Kyle orders. After ending the call, he immediately returned to Yue Baylian's side.

Devon caressed Yue Baylian's long hair, gently saying, "When you're better, you can be my secretary."

"But I...am not your secretary," Yue Baylian said, although his expression looked as if he was quite confused and uncertain.

"You are," Devon said with finality. He was clearly more confident about the answer, although he was the one who was actually lying.

"But I..."

Yue Baylian's retort was interrupted mid sentence, for he was silenced—silenced by a kiss... He stared at the slightly trembling golden eyelashes in front of his eyes.

The love he'd waited for, for more than ten years...

Yue Baylian gently closed his eyes.

"What's Gege doing?" Daren asked as he stared curiously at the couple who was currently kissing.

Theodore coldly observed, "Your brother is selling a kiss. One kiss has a base value of over ten billion, and the annual salary of an all-around secretary is around ten million."

After saying this, he quickly turned to Daren and added, "Your Gege's behavior is a bad example, you absolutely should not learn something like this!"

"Oh." Daren nodded obediently.

Ending the kiss, Devon slowly raised his head. While still looking at Yue Baylian he gently said, "I'll go to go see if the congee is done."

Yue Baylian delicately opened his eyes and replied with a tender smile, "Okay."

Devon left the room.

At this point, Yue Baylian suddenly noticed Daren. With a voice which no longer as frail as the one he was using before, he promptly asked, "Is little Shain3 all right?"

" "

Theodore could only stare, dumbfounded at the sight of the suddenly sober Yue Baylian.

"Shain Baylian?" Daren tilted his head. "He's very well. He even said he was going to avenge you."

"Tell him not to be silly. I'm alive and well. Make sure he holds on to the Lunaris Alliance."

Yue Baylian added crudely, "Go and tell him to access the computer in my study room. Tell him to open any word-processing software there and then type 'Devon and Yue-er.' The computer will show what I left for him."

"Okay." Daren nodded.

At this moment, Theodore finally found his tongue and asked in surprise, "You're not delirious?"

Yue Baylian glared at him, but right then, Devon suddenly returned. The person who was supposedly ill immediately laid back on the bed and returned to a dazed and frail state.

"Devon..." Theodore wanted to warn him that Yue Baylian's current condition was all just an act.

However, Devon only shot a cold glance back at him.

Theodore froze, unable to comprehend the meaning behind the gesture, but Daren drew closer within earshot and whispered, "It seems like Gege wants Papa to shut up!"

Upon hearing this, Theodore felt angry. Fine! Who cares about you, let him lie to you all you want!

"Come, Yue Ya-er, time to eat your congee." Devon sat on the bedside again.

Yue Baylian glanced at the bowl in Devon's hands and responded weakly, "But I don't have enough strength to hold the bowl."

"Then I'll feed you." Devon smiled, as his hand was already stirring the porridge.

"Fine, but before eating, could you kiss me again?"

"Hahaha!" As Devon carefully fed a spoonful of porridge through one side of Yue Baylian's mouth, he gently said "Wait until you're better so you can help me with my work, and then I'll give you another kiss!"

"Fine, but you can't go back on your word!" Yue Baylian said, as he obediently ate his porridge.

"Why would I go back on my word? As long as you work hard, the

rewards definitely won't be lacking."

"You promise..."

"Of course, haha!"

"These old foxes...they try to one-up each other at acting, with each act more despicable than the act before!"

Theodore couldn't bear to watch any more and dragged Daren with him away from the room. He couldn't risk Dar's angelic purity being polluted by the two shameless devils.

\* \* \*

"I'm off to school. Bye-bye! Papa Avery, you have to remember to eat breakfast!" Daren waved enthusiastically.

"Bye-bye," replied Theodore. As usual, he feebly waved goodbye.

He watched Daren and Ezart walk away until they were out of sight, and then slowly closed the door behind him...

"That kid is really like a child."

Theodore froze, then slowly turned around. It was Yue Baylian, who had just woken up the night before.

"You're already up and about?" Theodore was extremely shocked. The truth was, Yue Baylian had been in bed for almost a month. Normal people would have to go through therapy and rehabilitation in order to be able to do normal activities again.

Yue Baylian looked at him arrogantly, then haughtily replied, "Don't compare my martial arts lineage with you weak normal people."

Theodore murmured, "Whose martial arts. Yours? You think you're stronger than Dark Sun? Hmph!"

"What did you say?" Yue Baylian threatened, eyeing him with a deadly glare...a dangerously beautiful stare.

"Nothing. You're up so early. Want some black coffee?" Theodore made the very smart choice of not provoking a martial artist. Even if he wasn't stronger than Dark Sun, he could definitely overpower a doctor who spends all day in the laboratory.

"I don't drink that stuff. Drinking black coffee in the morning will only ruin the body."

"The Solaris Emperor also drinks it. He drinks even more than I do." Theodore instantly found a way to use his opponent's sweetheart's name to retaliate.

"What a bad habit." Yue Baylian frowned. However, since the subject now had something to do with Devon, he couldn't find the heart to

criticize his sweetheart and he changed the topic instead. "Right, what happened to my eye?"

"Blind, so I found a new one for you."

Theodore became excited when he began speaking about his experimental products. "I'm telling you, not only can you use that eye to scan everything and record it in the microchip in your head, you can also use it as an X-ray, and it can emit killer rays. However, this is still experimental, so it's better not to use it right now. If it accidentally explodes, then that would be bad..."

Yue Baylian become more and more angry as he listened and growled, "What the hell are you using my eye as?"

"A guinea pig," Theodore replied honestly. Truthfully, even Yue Baylian's brain could be considered his guinea pig.

"I'll kill you!" Yue Baylian's gaze was almost as scary as the killer rays.

Theodore hurriedly yelled, "Dar, Dar, someone wants to kill your Papa Avery!"

"You think I'd be afraid of him?" Yue Baylian coldly said.

"Dev, Dev, someone wants to kill your little brother's father, making your precious Dar sad!"

" "

After yelling, Theodore returned to his usual weak state, waving his hand. "All right! Hurry up and go back to bed and play dead. Once your body has fully recovered, Devon Solaris is sure to use you as his all-purpose secretary. At that point, you'll be the same as Kyle, with unfinishable work and endless overtime!"

Yue Baylian scowled.

Theodore gloated, "The price of the Solaris Emperor's kiss is very high and I think he's only willing to give you this one kiss, so don't even think about getting more! Now that's a huge disappointment, right?"

"I don't need you to care!" Yue Baylian lifted his head, walked back inside the house, and cried, "One kiss, I think it's worth it!"

Everyone has their own aspirations.

For his laboratory and funds, he could tolerate the BHP09 pointed at his head from time to time, even the bullet grazing his cheek as a sideshow. Theodore Avery had no qualifications to give advice. He drank a sip of his black coffee, planning to return to his laboratory and continue his experiments. Dar's DSII love simulation game...it should be an interesting experiment!

\* \* \*

Devon Solaris looked at Kyle's face on the phone screen, slowly opening

his mouth to say, "I got a new secretary, Yue Baylian. I believe his ability to work is not particularly low."

Kyle looked at the Solaris Emperor, maintaining a professional expression. He was waiting for instructions.

After looking at Kyle for a while, Devon coughed forcefully and said, "What you owe me, you've already paid off. If you want to leave, I'll allow it, and I'll give you the pharmacy as your retirement pension. You don't have to worry about not having the drugs."

Upon hearing this, Kyle was about to speak...

"But still!"

Devon interrupted him and said, "Right now, with Yue Baylian to help, your workload will, of course, decrease, and I'll even give you a raise of five hundred million...no, a billion!"

He thought about it. He really was used to having Kyle deal with everything. If he left, he was afraid of having difficulties...raising his annual salary by one billion was just insurance, and if Kyle really wanted to leave, then it would have to be two billion!

Kyle was silent, seeming to mull it over.

Devon Solaris waited until his hair stood on end. He didn't really want to leave, right? If he'd known earlier, he wouldn't have used this method to keep him...no! If he really wanted to leave, then he'd say it was a joke,

that he wasn't allowed to go!

Kyle slowly replied, "I think, I really do have to leave..."

What! Devon paled, and yelled, "You're not allowed to!"

Hearing this, Kyle stared blankly at him, finally saying with a quizzical look, "You just told me I could leave."

"But now you can't!" Daren slammed his hand on the table. "What? The Solaris Emperor can't lie once in a while?"

" ... "

On the screen, Kyle's face twisted strangely, but, unable to contain it for any longer, he soon burst into laughter.

Devon Solaris was at first able to keep a stern face, but Kyle kept laughing and laughing until he finally growled, "What are you laughing at?"

Seeing the Solaris Emperor's discomfort, Kyle tried to return to the professionalism of a secretary, but he could not resist laughing one last time. "Oh, Solaris Emperor, you've misunderstood. I'm not resigning, I want to travel on business. Recently, one of the branches on the continent seems to be having issues. In the past I wanted to deal with it myself, but I thought that if I left, this area wouldn't be taken care of properly, so I never requested to leave."

Hearing his explanation, Devon became flustered and pretended to look down at his paperwork. He said, "Oh, then no matter. In a few days, I'll let Yue Baylian come help you. Let him get used to things for a while, and when he's ready to take over, you can go up."

"Yes, Solaris Emperor." Kyle nodded.

Devon suddenly raised his head and said, "Right, you can add that billion to your salary yourself. I'll tell the pharmaceutical company heads to come find you."

Kyle gazed profoundly at the Solaris Emperor, then bowed respectfully as he replied, "Yes."

After he'd finished giving instructions, Devon turned off his phone. He thought, Although giving the pharmaceutical companies to Kyle means losing a powerful bargaining chip, it's a better solution in the long run.

Threats could keep someone loyal short-term, but over time, it could also make others dissatisfied and they'd try to find loopholes and regain control.

Plus, if it was humans arranging things, then there would always be a loophole no matter how flawless it seems.

One day, Kyle would find where the pharmaceutical companies were...one day, the drugs would have no hold over him...one day, discontent would spill over...

"I can fulfill all your desires as long as you are loyal to me, Kyle."

Devon Solaris looked at the phone screen, saying lowly, "Loyal to me."

\* \* \*

Daren Solaris was very, very happy these days.

Although Lance was still very annoying and protecting him was a deplorable task, the thought of Elian watching from the peephole next door enduring Sin's snoring made his own troubles seem very small.

Daren was so happy he invited everyone out to eat a late night snack.

"I'm going to get fat," Eloise complained as she ate.

Plus, Daren had taken the initiative to find Shain Baylian and and tell him his father was still alive. Originally, he was dubious, but after Daren told him his father's instructions, he believed him.

The next day, Shain Baylian went to find Daren.

"Since Father would rather have a lover than a son, then I don't need him either! Tell him that I'll take care of the Lunaris Alliance's matters so he doesn't ever have to come back!"

Shain Baylian angrily finished, then walked away without turning back.

Daren stared at Shain Baylian's retreating figure and could not help but laugh. His footsteps were light, almost dancing instead of walking. They weren't angry, heavy footsteps, so that meant he was actually very happy.

"You seem to be in a good mood lately."

Daren looked and saw it was Lance who asked the question. This was surprising because school was still in session. Lance usually talked a lot but was very serious in class. He almost never spoke, his eyes never left the blackboard, and he only took notes.

Seeing him like this, Daren also became quite studious. Class A was more interesting than Class D anyway, with vivid explanations about the latest weaponry and practical applications. There were also explanations about the recent major Western *modus operandi*, etc., which Daren found very useful and so was often engrossed in those lectures.

He was listening to the *modus operandi* of successful bombings when he heard Lance's question, and was about to open his mouth to say, "I am very happy," but he was pretending to be the wintry Dark Sun. How could he say that he was happy?

At this point, he became uncertain. He didn't know how to respond.

"You're always so cold and arrogant. This is more like you."

Lance noticed his silence and cracked a familiar smile.

Turned out he didn't actually expect him to talk. Daren felt a bit helpless. If he'd known earlier, he wouldn't have wanted to try and say something.

"Then I'll trouble you with managing tonight's Chinese opera," Lance said, smiling, and turned his attention back on the teacher's lecture.

Right! Tonight was the show, and Daren was inevitably a bit excited. This was the first time he was attending a Chinese opera!

Unfortunately, Ezart refused to go...

This was disappointing, although Eli-ge and the rest of them supported Ezart's decision.

Eloise even said venomously, "Just the thought of this big man wearing a suit to go see a Chinese opera...my eyes are rotting!"

Then, Ezart and Eloise ran off to the virtual simulation to duel. Of course, there was Eli to help on Eloise's side as well.

Elian regarded Daren Solaris. "Dar, going to an Chinese opera requires formal attire, so you'll need to find a suit to wear, but don't forget that you'll have to wear combat clothes underneath, too."

"A suit? Okay." Daren searched his microchip, trying to figure out what kind of clothing this was. If he remembered correctly, there was a whole

bunch of these suits in the wardrobe at home.

"Then I'll come pick you...no, ask your chauffeur to give us a ride!"

Elian was originally going to say he'd ride his motorcycle to pick up Daren, but just as the words exited his mouth, he remember that Daren had a sports car and a professional driver. Compared to motorcycles, a car and a driver seemed more appropriate when attending a formal show.

"Okay." After Daren agreed, he thought about it and asked, "Do you want the same car as last time?"

"You have other cars?" Elian's eyes shone with excitement.

"I don't, but Gege has a lot of cars. Kyle said I could use whichever one I wanted."

Elian couldn't resist saying, "Then, then let's use a different car!"

"Sure." Daren nodded.

Although the red beauty was charming, this was a chance to meet other beauties. There was, of course, nothing better, Elian thought halfheartedly.

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1. Yue Ya-er: 月牙儿 was what Yue Baylian went by when he pretended he was a girl. They are the same person.

2. Blindly lying with open eyes: Purposely lying despite clearly understanding the truth, as if one was oblivious to the situation.

3. Little Shain - A term of endearment, similar to Yue-er

Eclipse Hunter v04c10

Lesson 10: Besides love, there is also hate

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“Dar, you’re so handsome!”

Upon arriving at the Solaris home entrance, Elian, Eloise, and Eli saw that Daren was already standing outside waiting for them. Eloise took one look at how Daren was dressed and shrieked.

Daren wore a steel gray Western suit, hair combed back with a few strands purposely left down, playfully hanging by his cheek. Overall, he looked much more mature than usual. In order not to seem obtrusive, he’d replaced the goggles with silver sunglasses.

“Eloise, you’re also looking very cute, different from normal!” Daren replied, smiling.

Eloise was wearing a lacy dress and even had ribbons in her hair, looking like a doll. Elian wore a white suit, coupled with a gentle smile, and looked extremely amiable. Eli wore relatively unique traditional clothing. A wide white shirt, paired with equally wide, dark blue pants and secured at the middle with a fancy belt. Although his outfit was strange, people inexplicably felt that it suited him quite well.

“Ah! The car’s here!”

Daren called out. Not bothering to wait for the driver to get off and open the door for him, he himself excitedly pulled open the car door. He curiously asked the driver, who was in the front seat, "It really is the driver-ge from last time. Driver-ge, what's your name?"

Although the front seat was quite a ways from the back seat...but when Daren asked for a car from Kyle-ge, Kyle asked what kind of car he wanted. He thought for a bit. To listen to Chinese opera, he had to wear formal clothes, so the car also had to be formal, right?

"A formal car."

Now, the driver drove the black limousine over.

"Oh my god..." Eloise screamed.

Eliau had already turned into stone; this feeling was like...he wanted to see the beauty of noble ladies, but he didn't expect to meet, with no mental preparation, Her Majesty the Queen. He was so nervous he didn't know whether to first kneel, salute, or simply run out the door.

While waiting for Eliau and the others to gingerly get on the car, the driver replied, "Young master, I am Zyle."

"Your name is really similar to Kyle-ge's!" Daren smilingly looked at the driver, whose appearance was also a little like Kyle-ge's!

"Yes, Kyle is my brother," Zyle respectfully replied.

"..." Daren and Elian both froze for a moment, and then exclaimed together, "What?"

"So the multi-function computer is your big brother..." Eloise blurted.

Elian hurriedly covered Eloise's mouth. Really, how could she call him a "multi-function computer" right in front of his little brother?

"Yes, the multi-function computer, the Solaris Emperor's right hand, the most comprehensive encyclopedia, the dual housework/home affairs model who can even work sixteen hours consecutively in a day. The obedient one who endures manual labor, the thousand-use kind of good secretary, Kyle, is my big brother."

Eli felt as if he was using the introduction to some kind of product to introduce his brother.

Eloise and Daren also snorted and laughed loudly together. The corners of Elian's lips twitched a few times, and he could not resist chuckling.

Daren laughed as he said, "Zyle-ge, you're so funny!"

"The young master flatters me." Zyle said, smiling, "Young master, when leaving today, would you prefer to ride in this car or switch to a different one? Your friend doesn't seem to be used to this type of car."

"Are you?" Daren turned to look at Elian and the others.

The three immediately forcefully nodded.

"Then let's switch to a different one." Daren didn't really mind. In any case, Ezart didn't come, so there were only four people, and there was no need for such a large vehicle.

"Elian-ge, after we're done listening to the Chinese opera, let's go eat a midnight snack, okay?" Daren thought for a bit and added, "Let's get Ezart to come eat with us."

Elian listened and understood that he was still concerned about Ezart refusing to come. Naturally, he didn't want to shatter his spirits, and promised, "All right, let's go find Ezart afterwards and eat a midnight snack."

"Or come to my house to eat, then we can eat with Gege, Papa Avery, Kyle-ge...right, and Zyle-ge!"

Daren immediately shouted to the person in the front seat, "Zyle-ge, can you come eat a midnight snack with us?"

"It would be my pleasure, young master," Zyle agreed, smiling.

"That's great! We've added Zyle-ge to the list of people to eat a midnight snack with!"

Daren smiled so brilliantly, anyone who saw this smile would

understand that the smile's owner was really, truly happy.

Elia couldn't resist petting Daren's head.

Eloise immediately roared, "Ah! Stupid Elia, you messed up Dar's handsome hairstyle!"

Elia froze and lowered his head to look. He had indeed turned Dar's neat hair into a mess. He said, a bit nervously, "Ah, what to do about this..."

"Step aside!" Eloise squeezed past Elia and sat by Daren's side. She then took out a comb, carefully grooming his hair, not neglecting to scold Elia, "Fortunately, there's styling gel, so I just have to neaten it a little bit, or else see what you could have done! Stupid Elia..."

Elia was also a little remorseful, but upon seeing Daren giggling and peeking at him, his remorse immediately became bitter laughter. This punk was actually laughing at him.

"Young master, ahead of us is the opera house." At this point, Zyle issued a reminder.

"Oh, okay." Daren also became a bit nervous. This was the first time he was going to a place like an opera house, and he hurriedly asked, "Eloise, are you done combing my hair?"

Eloise put the last strand into its original position. After looking it up and down, she said with a clap, "Okay, perfectly flawless!"

At this time, Zyle parked in front of the opera house, and then got off the car, walked to the backseat, and opened the door for his young master.

"See you in a little bit, Zyle-ge." Daren smiled as he bid him goodbye.

"Yes, young master." Zyle maintained the deferential bow, waiting for the young master to come out.

After he finished saying goodbye, Daren stepped out of the car. As he regained his footing, raising his head, there was no smile on his face. There were only impeccable manners and a chilly aura that allowed no one to get close to him.

The protagonist was now Dark Sun.

\* \* \*

Elian also followed him off the car. Once he got off, he felt a bit strange, as there was no one in line to get into the opera house.

He inquired about this to Zyle. Zyle smiled and replied, "This is VIP admission. Only about five hundred invitations were made, all for business elites. Actually, the Solaris Emperor also received an invitation, but it seemed that he did not have any interest in coming."

Then naturally there would be nobody lining up to get in. Elian

laughed, seeing that upon the arrival of the stretch limousine, there were few surprised expressions. He should have known that, tonight, this opera house's entrance would have luxury cars.

After Zyle drove away, they were led into the opera house. By the enormous, classical-style opera house's entrance, only the row in front of the stage was filled with people. The other places were all empty, making the entire opera house seem deserted.

"Excuse me, which one of you is Mr. Dark Sun?" the attendant asked respectfully.

"I am," Daren replied with some confusion. The attendant actually knew his name?

"Please follow me. The other three guests may follow this attendant."

Elian hurriedly shouted, "Wait a second! Why can't we walk together?"

"Because the locations of your seats are not the same." The attendant wore a smile as he continued, "Mr. Dark Sun is in the first row, but your seats are in the fifth row, so you must be led separately."

Why did they have to walk separately? Elian frowned and glanced at Dark Sun.

Dark Sun looked at the location and opened his mouth to say, "It doesn't matter. They aren't too far apart."

Hearing this, Elian also nodded. Even if they walked separately, it was only a distance of five rows, and they could still see the top of Dark Sun's head. There wasn't anything to worry about. The first row was probably reserved for other important people!

After Elian and the two others followed the second attendant to their seats, they all raised their heads, a little worried about the still-walking Dark Sun.

Dark Sun was led to the first row and the attendant bowed respectfully, saying, "Honored guest, this is your seat. Please sit, and if you need anything, you only have to lightly beckon and an attendant will immediately help you."

Dark Sun looked at his seat but did not sit down.

The first row didn't have anyone sitting there, and Dark Sun's seat was right in the middle of the first row.

"Eli." Elian felt that the situation was off, immediately asking the mind-reading companion next to him.

Eli was silent for a moment, and then said, "The attendant seems normal. He believes that Dark Sun is a very important guest, so he can take up an entire row."

"What about Dar?" Eloise asked anxiously.

Eli was silent for another moment, and said, "He's a little confused and a bit afraid, but only a little bit. He thinks that we're sitting close to him, so he feels reassured."

"Eli, pay attention to the surroundings," Elian said quietly.

"I will." Eli nodded his head.

After that, the curtain began to rise on the opera. Elian's trio didn't dare to say much more, lest they disturb their fellow opera-viewers...Everyone around them at the time was a someone they couldn't afford to offend.

As Elian's trio worried, the opera started.

An exceedingly joyous household was celebrating the arrival of a child. Lance was on stage from the very beginning. He played the father. The mother was another beautiful and talented singer. The two people standing together looked like a perfect pair.

The two of them truly were like a couple who had been blessed with a child, their faces filled with joy. The gazes of the husband and the wife were filled with deep love for their baby.

However, it seemed even the heavens were envious of their happiness. And so, one day, the originally blue sky became covered with dark clouds, and a demon descended from the heavens.

The demon, with strong wings upon his back and long white hair, seemed to be intent on destroying the happiness of people. He leached

the color from his surroundings, leaving a swath of dead white.

The demon was contemptuous of the family's joy. In the midst of the screams of the father and child, he kidnapped the mother, effortlessly obliterating their peace of mind.

In the sky, he mocked the fragility and weakness of their happiness.

After the mother had been whisked away, only the father and child were left on stage. They quietly shed tears. The child was the first to stand up. He was still young, and sadness does not stay long in children's hearts. He circled his father, singing and dancing.....

Elian watched with great interest. Although he didn't understand much about opera, the performance of the actors onstage was excellent. Even someone who didn't understand opera could sense this. In addition, the music and singing were all live performances. As he listened, he had goosebumps

Especially when the demon kidnapped the mother, as the trio onstage soared to a pitch impossible for normal people, the audience's minds went blank. There was only that soaring note, rising unnaturally high.

Eloise quietly muttered, "That demon is a lot like....."

"What?" Elian hadn't heard her clearly, but as he was asking Eloise, the play onstage took another dramatic turn. He hurriedly closed his mouth, paying attention to the story.

The demon returned the mother.

The father supported his beloved, yet she nearly sank back on to the floor.

The mother unexpectedly discovered that she was with child again.

The demon in the sky condescendingly laughed. "This is a gift to you! My gift to you! A shattered happiness should be even more painful than a lack of happiness. From now on, live in agony! Ahahaha!"

The father faced the empty sky and cried, "I will definitely restore our happiness again! I definitely will!"

Ten months passed. The demon's son was born, but the mother also lost her life.

Once again, the father screamed at the sky for the loss of his beloved.....

At this time, the curtain fell and the enthralled audience suddenly realized that it was already time for intermission.

However, Elian's trio was still sitting in their seats. Elian pondered gravely. Why did this story sound so familiar? It seemed a lot like Dar's history.....

"Elia, I really wanted to say, th-that demon couldn't be... couldn't have been based off Dark Sun, could he?

Eloise said this with some trepidation. She had felt for a while that this was all very strange. That demon's wings and hair, why did they look just like Dark Sun's? Even the red shirt and leggings looked similar.

Elian froze, recalling the demon's appearance. The demon had a head of white hair and strong, blade-like wings. Although he wore more traditional-styled clothing, the colors really were exactly the same as Dark Sun's.

"Daren also feels this is very bizarre. He is nervous, sad, and deeply terrified," Eli abruptly reported to the two others, his voice uncharacteristically anxious.

Hearing this, Elian raised his head to look at Daren. Daren was still sitting at his seat. Someone who didn't have the ability to read minds really could not tell how he was feeling.

"Let's go over to check," Elian suggested to his two companions, intending to head over to check on Daren's condition.

But just as they stood up, the attendant suddenly came over, gently apologizing, "I'm sorry. Intermission has ended. Please be seated and enjoy the opera."

"I want to go to the bathroom!" Eloise hurriedly exclaimed. She was really worried about how Dar was feeling, and wanted to check on him.

The attendant smiled and said, "Please wait until later, lest you miss

seeing part of our wonderful opera!"

Hearing this, Elian's trio paused. This attendant was very odd...He was actually barring the audience from using the bathroom?

Elian thought for a moment, and extended a hand to restrain Eloise and Eli. "We understand. We'll sit back down." Elian, as if to confirm his own words, was the first to sit back down.

However, he intensely thought, Eli. Prepare for battle at any moment. Be on alert.

Eli shook his head and turned to say, "Eloise, endure it for now. Wait to go later."

"O.K."

Upon hearing this, Eloise understood that her two companions had already made preparations, so she immediately sat down obediently.

At this unexpected opening, some nearby viewers also took the opportunity to complain as well. But the opera resumed again, and everyone quieted down, attentively watching the stage.

The days passed, one by one. The mother's two children also grew up, day by day. The second child, the demon and the mother's child, was gifted with a beguilingly beautiful face. His first victim was his own brother.

(It isn't like that!)

The older brother had forgotten his mother's hatred, and had forgotten he was still at an age where he should be studying. So, he spent entire days playing with his wild brother.

(No! Gege only spent an hour with me each day!)

The father spent so much effort and energy to save his child, but in the process of creating the seal, the second child stabbed him to death with a blade.

At this time, the seal finally came into effect, and the younger brother desperately roared. He intended to drive the knife in his hand into his brother's body, but it was in vain. The father's seal began to send him to the place he belonged: Hell.

Then, the younger brother, the murderer of the father, gripped his blade, and walked, step by step, towards his brother. The older brother, unaware of the looming danger, still smiled when he saw his younger brother approach him.....

(No! I never, never thought of hurting Gege!)

The older brother suddenly became aware of the situation. He walked to his father, fell to his knees, and hid his face, crying.

At the time, the stage lights dimmed. The curtains slowly came down. When the audience thought the play was finished.....

The father who had been stabbed to death suddenly stood up.

Upon seeing this, the actors onstage playing the human son and the demon's son were stunned.

Lance walked to the front of the stage, and passionately gazed at the single audience member in the front row: Daren.

He opened his mouth and gently said, "I've been observing you for some time now. I couldn't think, ah, I couldn't think of why I have been unable to seal you. From the beginning, you were not the perfect bodyguard Dark Sun, but instead, the original...Demon's child!"

Daren froze. Demon's child?

Seeing this spectacle, the audience felt there was something strange. They couldn't figure out if this was part of the story or an improvisation. Everyone watched the lone audience member seated in the front row, whispering and murmuring.

Daren looked up at Lance. For the first time, he seriously evaluated this person, and suddenly noticed that Lance looked similar to Devon. He had the same golden hair and ruby eyes, except Devon's eyes were clearer and Lance's face was more mature.

"Who are you?" After he finished speaking, Daren realized his words

had come out hoarsely. He touched his cheek and realized it was covered with tears.

Lance stood upon the stage, and looked down upon him. Lance stopped smiling and coldly said, "Child, do you still not understand?"

Child? Daren's breathing became ragged. He had an idea of who this was, but how could it be possible?

"I am your father. The father you killed."

# Eclipse Hunter v05 Intro

# Character Introduction

Translators: Laridae, Trespasserby (contribution) Proofreaders: Zephynel, Sora

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## ◇Devon Solaris◇

Identity: Leader of world's largest trade union--the Solaris Alliance, thus known as the Solaris Emperor.

Personality: A super good sibling who dotes on his little brother

Appearance: Bright golden hair and crimson eyes; mature and calm

Weapon: BHP09

Catchphrase: "Didi, remember to ×××, remember not to ●●●, you also need to ○○○, don't forget ◎◎◎."

## ◇Daren Solaris◇

Identity: Devon Solaris's young brother; half-cyborg Dark Sun

Personality: Innocent little brother with a mysterious and cruel alter-ego,

Dark Sun Appearance: Silver-hair and dark eyes; sweet and innocent

Weapon: Steel claw, Reaper's Scythe, Wings of Steel... and many more

Catchphrase: "Understood!"

## ◇Theodore Avery◇

Identity: Dark Sun's surgeon, a doctor who works in secret since his license was revoked Personality: An experimental research fanatic

Appearance: Aquamarine hair and dark green eyes; small-framed eyeglasses Weapon: None

Catchphrase: "... (helpless appearance)"

### ◇Ezart◇

Identity: Daren Solaris's classmate; the fearsome "King of YeLan Academy"

Personality: Bully

Appearance: Spiky orange-colored hair and blue eyes; dragon tattoo on the left side of his face  
Weapon: A pair of fists to flatten the world  
Catchphrase: "Are you an idiot?"

### ◇Shain Baylian◇

Identity: Second-largest coalition chief's son; Daren Solaris's classmate  
Personality: Arrogant prince  
Appearance: Black hair and purple eyes; likes to wear Chinese-style clothing  
Weapon: A pair of three-pronged spears  
Catchphrase: "You and I are of different worlds."

### ◇Eloise◇

Identity: A special combat student  
Personality: A violent girl who loves pretty boys and male idols  
Appearance: Short pink hair and red eyes; an attractive girl  
Weapons: Twin giant mallets  
Catchphrase: "Dar~ you're too cute!"

### ◇Eli◇

Identity: A special combat student  
Personality: An easily forgotten "ice cube" in the corner  
Appearance: Light green hair and silver eyes  
Weapon: Fei Dao (flying daggers) & mind-reading  
Catchphrase: "... (expressionless)"

### ◇Elian◇

Identity: A special combat student  
Personality: Outwardly smiling,

inwardly unsmiling tiger; kind exterior, cruel interior Appearance: Russet hair and blue eyes; a warm-hearted big brother Weapon: Dual lightsabers

Catchphrases: "Wow! (extremely exaggerated sigh) Is this true?"

◇Kyle◇

Identity: Solaris Emperor's right hand, also known as the multi-purpose secretary Personality: Vows to fulfill tasks given to him even if it kills him Appearance: Black hair and blue eyes; poker-faced Weapon: Computer Catchphrase: "Yes, it is as you say."

◇Yue Baylian◇

Identity: Leader of Lunaris Alliance Personality: Pervert Appearance: Dark purple hair and golden eyes; a glamorous-looking Chinese man Weapon: Lightwhip Catchphrase: "Devon Solaris, there will be a day when I have you!"

◇Sin◇

Identity: Always flunking combat class Personality: Uses underhanded methods for the sake of victory; Machiavellian Appearance: Short black hair and green eyes; somewhat androgynous Weapon: Metal-plated boots

Catchphrase: "Winning is everything."

◇Antonias◇

Identity: Principal of YeLan Academy Personality: Profit over pride Appearance: An immortal old man Weapon: "Pester" tactic Catchphrase: "What about this?"

◇DSII/Dark Sun Two◇

◇DSII/Dark Sun Two◇

Identity: Dark Sun's clone

Personality: Cyborg

Appearance: Same as Dark Sun Weapon: Same as Dark Sun

Catchphrase: None

◇Lance◇

Identity: World-famous singer Personality: ?

Appearance: Blond hair and red eyes Weapon: Singing

Catchphrase: "Ah! Unparalleled beauty!"

◇Zyle◇

Identity: Kyle's little brother Personality: Humorous driver-ge

Appearance: When you see his face, you'll forget it immediately Weapon:

All kinds of brand-name cars Catchphrase: "Eat little, sleep little; do it all

and do it well—that's my brother's specialty."

◇DSX◇

◇DSX◇

Identity: Daren Solaris's clone Description: Cyborg

Appearance: Same as Daren Solaris Weapon: Same as Daren Solaris

Catchphrase: None



# Prologue

Translators: Souldead

Proofreaders: Zephynel, Amalice

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In the year 2105, countries are on the decline and the Earth has been divided between some hundreds of financial organizations. These organizations, in the name of pursuing profit, have gathered under numerous trade cartels. Out of these, the first and foremost is the Solaris Federation, controlling 30% of the world's economic flow. The leader of the Solaris Federation is thought to hold the greatest power and influence on Earth.

It's not that no one thought to attack the existence of this supreme being; it's just that he seemed to be able to foretell the future. When danger is imminent, he rises above, either preemptively striking down the opponent or waiting like a lion in the bush and pouncing on the enemy, right when their victory seemed complete. Those who plot against him often discover that at the crucial moment, it was they who were plotted against. Everyone who collapsed before being able to beat him would cry that they had only been one step away from defeating him.

Once, twice...it was the same every time. At last, everyone understood that it was neither luck nor fate: everything was under his control! All who had once competed against him swore to never oppose him again.

They say that all things happen within his plan and that no scheme nor trickery ever escapes his notice. On this planet he exists like a god. He will

never fall. They deferentially call this legendary figure the Solaris Emperor.

Devon Solaris glared at the computer screen but was constantly distracted, his thoughts always floating to a certain silver-haired youth.

"Solaris Emperor? Solaris Emperor?"

After being called two or three times by his most commonly used title, Devon finally snapped back to the present. He glanced at the computer--his secretary Kyle was calling him relentlessly from the screen. Impatiently, Devon snapped, "What?"

Finally! Kyle suppressed a sigh and proceeded to report. "Please sign this document, the contents of which I have just detailed," even though the Solaris Emperor only caught half of it.

As soon as Kyle stopped talking the screen shifted from his face to a crowded and wordy form. Devon lifted his electronic stylus and, without a single glance at the screen, signed his name on the indicated spot.

"Today's official business has now come to an end, Solaris Emperor. Please rest soon."

The screen was once again filled with Kyle's face. He put away the file as he began a new task. The day's work had been completed, but only for the Solaris Emperor. For Kyle, the time had not yet come to pack up and go home.

Ten minutes later Kyle raised his head, since the Solaris Emperor had yet to close the signal: evidently he had an errand for him. The Emperor would definitely not have needed ten minutes to contemplate any work-related assignments. Therefore, the matter must have involved young master Daren Solaris.

"Dar's not back yet."

Another ten minutes passed. Kyle had already answered five messages requesting assistance when the apprehensive Devon Solaris finally opened his mouth. "What if something happened? Last time he went to the supermarket, he met a terrorist. This time, he's at the opera. What if, what if he encounters a flood? Or a tornado? An explosion?"

That was actually possible!

Even though Kyle sincerely believed that due to Master Daren's...how to describe it? Bad luck? Frequency of accidents? Whatever it was, nothing that happened to the young master surprised him anymore. However, he couldn't respond to the Solaris Emperor this way. Chances were, nothing good would happen.

He could only be sympathetic. "Emperor, you worry too much. Young master Daren is only going to the opera. There will be plenty of business and political elites, not to mention the best singer in the world. Security is no doubt watertight: even if there were to be an explosion, it would never affect the theatre."

At least, it should be this way, right? He added to himself.

"Is that so? But then why is he still not home? It's already past eleven." Devon said, emphasizing the word "eleven." Taking into account the length of the opera and the distance from the theatre, it was quite unlikely, even if the young master were to rush out immediately after the show, that he would arrive home right now. The Emperor should have been able to reason this out himself. Indeed, when it came to the young master, the Solaris Emperor's IQ seemed to halve itself.

Kyle gave a mental sigh and reminded the Emperor, "Maybe he went out for a late night snack. Doesn't the young master often enjoy eating midnight snacks when he's together with his friends?"

"That is true."

Still, even after saying this, the Solaris Emperor did not end the conversation. Kyle had no choice but to continue with his tasks, raising his head occasionally to check if Devon's expression had changed.

Finally, after another ten minutes or so, Devon Solaris's eyes began to drift and he muttered as if to himself, "Would he think I were too overbearing if I called?"

"You could ask Mr. Avery to call the young master instead. He often asks the young master to bring home late night snacks, so he could use the same excuse this time. Young master wouldn't suspect anything at all." Kyle suggested calmly while silently overturning his previous statement. He had been truly mistaken--when it came to Daren, the Emperor's IQ didn't merely halve itself. It had seemingly jumped off a cliff without a parachute. It wasn't merely halved, but also divided by 10.

"That works!"

Devon Solaris finally made up his mind and shut the connection without hesitation, tossing aside the now-defunct secretary. He then entered the communication signal for home. However, he had absolutely no desire to see Theodore Avery's zombie-like face, so he did not open a display screen. As such, only Avery's voice came through the phone:

"Solaris Emperor? Did something happen to Dar again?"

"What are you talking about! Nothing happened to Dar...do you want a midnight snack?" Devon went straight to the point after that reprimand.

" ... "

In the basement Avery was speechless for a moment, then turned to glance at the clock on the wall and sighed, "I understand. Then I'll phone Dar."

"Don't hang up on me. Use the other line instead. I want to hear Dar's voice." Devon Solaris immediately added.

"Yes, yes!" Unable to disobey, Avery typed in Daren Solaris's cellphone number.

The phone rang again and again, but no one answered. Finally, Avery hung up the phone, ending the ceaseless tone at last.

"How could no one pick up...Dar!"

It took several minutes after the ringtone stopped for Devon Solaris to snap out of it. His expression changing drastically, he urgently pressed the button connecting him to the secretary, intending to order the immediate activation of the Special Task Force.

"Wait a minute! Don't be too hasty! He only missed a phone call. What if he was riding the bike and couldn't take the call...Oh!" Avery hurried through half of what he was going to say, only to remember what kind of person Daren Solaris was...He is the half-cyborg Dark Sun! Even if he were accosted by a dozen or so modified humans, he would still be able to fight and talk with Devon over the phone simultaneously, not to mention a measly bike ride. Dar's capabilities definitely exceeded taking a call.

Could something really have happened?

Avery hesitated--it couldn't have, right? It was just an opera, and furthermore he was accompanied by Elia and the others. But then, last time he went to the mall, they were also there, and then they met terrorists...Oh! This time, even Avery shut his mouth.

Seeing how Avery had no more reassuring comments, Devon Solaris became even more restless, instantly shouting to the bemused secretary: "Bill! Hurry, mobilize the Special Task Force at once and find Dar's location!"

"Yes sir." Bill began the process without delay, at the same time exclaiming silently: so something had happened after all.

Ah! For the world to remain at peace, maybe they should just install a tracker and listening device in Daren's body next time. Avery mused upon some awful ideas.

"Gege, Papa Avery, I'm back! I also bought some snacks! Why don't we eat them together?"

Bill halted the task force mobilization.

Devon Solaris was dumbstruck.

In the end, it was Avery who showed some presence of mind, pressing the button which connected to the living room and answering, "You're back, Dar. Are you in the living room?"

"Yup...Ah, right! Papa Avery, why did you call my cellphone? I was just parking the car so I didn't pick up."

"So that's what it was." The corners of Avery's mouth climbed higher and higher. This time the Solaris Emperor messed up big time.

Hearing Daren's reply, Bill immediately typed 'NO' in the reply box of the Special Task Force's inquiry as to whether they should deploy. He then turned and pretended to grab another file, all the while smiling secretly.

However, Devon Solaris did not mingle among economic circles for ten years for nothing. Having had his mettle tested many times, he instantly

returned to normal, as if nothing at all just happened and spoke very naturally into the phone: "Oh, you're back, Dar. Bring the snacks upstairs and we can eat them together. Avery just told me he wasn't hungry anyway!"

I am very hungry! Avery wailed internally, yet he was too timid to speak the truth out loud. He could only grudgingly console himself with the thought of making some instant noodles later.

"Okay."

It was only when Daren Solaris pushed open the study door and walked into the room that Devon truly let out the breath he had been holding. It wasn't enough to just hear his voice; he needed to see his little brother safe and sound to finally relax.

"Was the opera good?" He smiled.

"Oh, Elian-ge and the others said it was pretty good, but I couldn't tell..." Daren looked a little frustrated.

Devon hurried to reassure him. "Not a problem. I could never tell if they sounded good or not either. Only a few boring people like listening to that stuff anyway."

"Really? Gege can't tell either?"

Daren looked much more relaxed. Walking in front of big brother's desk he put a bag on top of it and smiled, "Tonight's snack is BBQ chicken

skewers! Does gege like chicken?"

As long as it was Daren's snack, it doesn't matter if it were chicken or even human flesh, he'd eat it all with a smile, thought the secretary and the doctor on the other ends of the phone.

"I like it. Of course I like it." Indeed, Devon immediately declared his love of chicken.

Daren grinned. "Then gege you eat first and I'll go make some coffee for you."

"Alright."

Suddenly, Devon Solaris had a feeling that true happiness was no more than this, right here.

However, as Devon came to the doorway he paused for a bit, then turned back and said: "Does gege still drink black coffee? Could you not drink black coffee anymore?"

"Huh?" Devon, not expecting to hear this, was startled.

Daren, concerned, said, "I saw on the news that black coffee is not good for the body, so it's better to add a bit of milk. Is that okay?"

Habits established for many years are difficult to change, so Devon finally frowned at his brother's request. But his little brother promptly

lowered his head. "If gege got sick, or if his body is not well, I would definitely be sad..." He said this in a low, worried voice.

"Oh...Alright!" Devon surrendered at once. When his most precious little brother was distressed, he would comply even if he drank only milk from then on, not to mention a bit of milky coffee.

"That's great! Then I'll go make gege's coffee now!"

"Sure." Devon smiled.

Avery stifled his laughter on the other end until Devon said coldly, "What are you laughing about?" He hurried to compose himself, then sighed with emotion, "Dar really has grown up, even looking after his brother now! You must be very touched, Emperor."

It looked like the Solaris Emperor would definitely be bossed around in the future. If a mother were too strict one would call her a 'tiger mom'. What, then, would a strict brother be called? Tiger brother? Hahaha! Ah, but these thoughts could only be laughed about in silence, since they can never be said aloud.

On the other end, Kyle's tension eased. In the end, the Emperor was simply overthinking things. Maybe the Emperor and the young master stood a chance in living a normal family life...ah! Disregarding Devon Solaris's extreme brother complex and the fact that Mr.Avery obviously could not be their father, these three could grudgingly pass for a normal family, right?

"Avery, come upstairs and have some snacks."

Devon was a bit reluctant to offer. Although it would be great to eat the food with Dar, just the two of them, Dar would definitely be delighted if Avery were there.

Hearing this, Avery was overcome with gratitude. Compared to chicken skewers, instant noodles were not fit for human consumption, especially since even pigs wouldn't want to eat the noodles he made.

When Daren returned with coffee, Avery was already sitting in the study, staring bug-eyed at the skewers with his stomach growling. However, he didn't dare raise a finger under Devon's cold and watchful eyes.

"Dar, you're back." Avery pouted. "Your brother refuses to eat without you."

Seeing this, Daren hurried to sit down. Smiling, he shouted with the others: "Let's begin!"

Eclipse Hunter v05c1

[Friends, if what I bring is disaster and suffering, do you vow to love me?]

Translators: Laridae, Tresspasserby

Proofreaders: Zephynel, Sora

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"I am the father, the father you killed."

Lance revealed a faint smile. This was an expression that the old him with his exaggerated demeanor had never shown before, and this expression was extremely like Devon Solaris's, like the Solaris Emperor's perpetually arrogant smile.

Gege... Daren was shocked, growling, "Impossible!"

Lance smiled briefly and said, "You can compare my pupil to your father's in your database and see if it is the same. Should this not be a simple task for you, hmm, Dark Sun?"

"Father was killed by me."

Daren said stubbornly, but he was unwilling to truly confirm it. He vaguely sensed and understood that what Lance had said was true, but he didn't want to actually check. He'd finally come to terms with the reality that he had killed his father. If Father came back, he would... he should...

At this point, Lance's patience had run out. He used an imperative tone to say, "Dark Sun, confirm that I am 'Father.'"

Daren's expression became panicked, but he reluctantly lifted his head. His silver pupils flashed a bunch of numbers, and his mouth opened automatically to speak: "Confirmation in progress. Pupils are similar; looks and appearance are a match; it has been confirmed that the target is 'Father.' If two or more people match this identity, will further confirm if the DNA is the same."

It really is Father... his complexion suddenly became pale.

"Did you forget?" Lance revealed another arrogant grin, as if the person he was looking at was an ant. "I can command you, Dark Sun. Now hand over your cell phone."

As Daren walked over, he pulled his cell phone out of his embrace. He desperately wanted to stop but was only able to make his body shudder. He had no power to resist Lance's order. Why was it like this? He could clearly resist even his brother's commands, right?

Quickly, stop! You can't give your cell phone to Father. You should call someone immediately. You need to call Gege, let him give you a command; his commands are at a higher level than Father's... kill Father now!

Although his thoughts ran in this direction, Daren still took step after step toward Lance. Finally, he handed his cell phone into Lance's hand. Just as Lance was looking contentedly at the phone, Daren turned abruptly around, calling down to the audience, "El-ge, all of you hurry

and leave!”

Elian and the other two froze. They showed absolutely no intention of running away. How could they ditch Daren Solaris and leave?

Seeing that they were motionless, Daren became anxious and yelled, “Go notify my brother that only his command level is higher than Father’s! Hurry...!”

Lance said lightly, “Dark Sun, shut up, and then connect to this opera house’s computer system. The passcode is 18795...”

When Lance finished his order, Daren’s voice disappeared. Lance wasn’t afraid of him opening his mouth, let alone him making any noise. As a substitute, his dark pupils continuously flashed numbers, including the series of passcodes Lance had just said.

“Connected.” Daren Solaris’s voice was as cold as a computer’s.

Lance continued giving orders naturally, as if he were Devon Solaris giving orders to Kyle. “Now, immediately seal off all the exits, emit interference waves blocking all communication, and command all the modified humans in the opera house to destroy all the bodyguards outside.”

Daren’s breathing quickened. As Lance issued more and more commands, his pupils also flashed more and more numbers. At this time, the opera house’s doors closed. From each edge a huge metal structure extended outwards, forming a door made of mesh.

Outside, there was not even a bit of noise. The opera house's soundproofing was exceptionally good. The only one who knew what was happening outside was Daren Solaris. He was trembling, but was powerless to stop it.

"What happened?"

"What's the matter?"

"What the hell..."

The dazed audience and the actors onstage finally ascertained that things were not quite right. They stood up one by one, hollering and screaming. Some people even took out weapons. Although the opera house prohibited carrying weapons, these political and business elites were all the type of people whose weapons never left them. They were naturally able to find numerous loopholes to slip through, secretly bringing weapons into the opera house.

"Lance, what exactly are you doing?"

At this time, the two actors on the stage who played the child and the devil's son rushed behind Lance. Both were furious, because no matter how things developed, in short, this show was over, so how could they not be angry?!

Lance didn't even look back, only saying lightly, "Kill them all."

Daren froze momentarily before instantly jumping onto the stage. His speed was so shocking that the two actors didn't even have time to react, simply standing there as they saw a trace of a shadow hit.

Daren's first objective was the actor who played the child, because that was the actor who was closest to Lance and was therefore more of a threat. He instinctively chose this target and extended his steel nails.

Seeing this actor, he unconsciously thought of his older brother, and screamed, "Don't!"

Keng!

"Eloise..." Daren exhaled an immense sigh.

Eloise was holding one of the opera house's chairs, forcibly using this object to block Daren's attack. Just a moment ago, when Eli had discovered the command Lance would make, she viciously jerked up the chair that was fixed to the ground and rushed to block Daren.

"Dar, what-what happened to you?" Eloise asked, gasping for breath. Heaven knew what kind of random power she suddenly gained, to be able to block Daren's attack before he killed the actors.

"I can't control myself, leave quickly!" Daren pled panickedly. "Please, Eloise, quickly escape! Go find my brother and tell him that Father is still alive, Lance is Father, he..."

"What's wrong, child?"

Lance, who was standing behind Daren, gently picked up a strand of Daren's silver hair, and asked in a languid tone.

Daren said, trembling, "Don't, don't give that command..."

"What command? Is it this command?"

Lance smiled lightly and said, "Activate the modified humans inside the opera house; crush the people below. You will be responsible for crushing your three friends. Beat them until they're close to death."

This string of commands flashed across Daren's pupils.

At this time, Elia, who was below the stage, ran up while shouting, "Disregard Dar, attack Lance!"

This loud roar resounded in the opera house. Eloise heard it as well, but hearing it was one thing and being able to do it was another. When the light Daren's steel nails were reflecting shone continuously into her own eyes, Eloise almost replied, Forget Lance, coming to save me is more important!

Dragging Dark Sun along, letting Elia go attack Lance...Eloise knew this was the best way. Although she knew how strong Dark Sun was, she didn't even have a single weapon, and so she could only steel herself and do it.

"Eloise, leave." Daren's tears swam in his eyes.

Strange! He felt that his own body was a bit strange. It was as if, compared to normal, it was more...

"Dar, don't hit too heavily!"

Eloise pleaded with a distressed face, but as she spoke, she aimed a vicious kick at Dark Sun's knees. This, she knew, was the way to heavily injure Dark Sun in one strike...this detail was really thanks to Sin, as last time in the midst of the autograph-seeking crowd, he'd wounded Dark Sun's knees at the start, putting Dark Sun at a disadvantage.

...it was more powerful than usual!

Daren's body lowered slightly, allowing Eloise to kick his thigh. Eloise's strength was different from other people's but only made him use the other leg to kick back, changing his center of gravity. At this moment, his two fists attacked simultaneously. One fist struck Eloise's chest while the other one struck her abdomen at the same time. Altogether, this attack did not rely solely on his fists' power. Dark Sun exerted force on one of his legs, allowing his whole body to lean forward...he used his whole body's strength in that two-handed strike.

Such scary power...a fountain of blood spurted from Eloise's mouth before a strong force made her fly back across half the stage. She collided brutally with the back wall. A large boom sounded. Before her mind blanked out, she could only feel...fear!

"Eloise!"

Elian and Eli's expressions both changed. They had never thought that Eloise would fail to block one of Dark Sun's strikes.

Was Dark Sun...really this strong?

It was only at this point that Lance leisurely said, "Dark Sun, protect me."

Elian listened and decided quickly. He immediately ran toward Lance, intending to crush that command-issuing throat in one blow.

But because weapons were prohibited in the opera house, the three students did not use loopholes like the political and commercial elite and had instead obediently complied with the rules. Therefore, neither of them had any weapons on hand. Elian, who usually used energy weapons, could only use his fists to attack...

However, two flying daggers were faster than Elian's figure, rushing straight for Lance's throat and chest.

Eli, you actually secretly brought weapons...you did well! Elian immediately recognized them as Eli's flying daggers and almost wanted to start cheering.

Seeing that the flying daggers were about to finish Lance, however, there was suddenly a black shadow that flashed onto the stage. It reached out and stopped the two flying daggers mid-flight and also

stepped between Elian and Lance.

"Driver!"

Elian was very shocked. The one who had blocked the flying dagger wasn't Dark Sun, but was actually the person who'd driven the car to get them here, Zyle. What exactly was happening? Although he was extremely astonished, there was no time to ponder. He had to take advantage of the fact that Dark Sun was not yet here and hurry and take out Lance.

At this point, Zyle pulled something that looked like a sword hilt from his waist. With one shake, the hilt emitted a glowing blade. It was an energy blade.

"Die!"

Elian's expression changed dramatically. He was all too familiar with this type of weapon. Unlike normal swords, it couldn't be touched. So in the hands of a skilled swordsman, even Elian would be unable to break through his defense quickly.

But he was wrong. Zyle had no intention of defending. He brandished his light saber and struck first.

Elian did not expect this, so he was flustered for a moment. But it was only because this action was contrary to his predictions. Following that, he immediately regained the upper hand in the fight. Zyle wasn't very strong. Given five minutes, Elian would be able to defeat this punk.....

Ugh! He didn't have any weapons at the moment, so it would take closer to ten minutes!

However, disregarding ten minutes, not even ten seconds had passed before Zyle stepped aside. Just when Elian was wondering about this odd action, behind Zyle appeared..... Dark Sun!

Elian's fighting instincts immediately kicked in..... Back up. Back up as far as possible!

Although his instincts told to back up, he couldn't! If he really did retreat, he was afraid he wouldn't be able to close the distance between Lance and himself again.

This time, was it was his turn to fend off Dark Sun to allow Eli the chance to attack Lance? Elian couldn't help but bitterly smile to himself. He only hoped that he would be more helpful than Eloise.

At that moment, Dark Sun struck out with his palm.

When Elian was about to intercept the strike, he suddenly remembered that at first glance, Dark Sun seemed to also be unarmed. However, Dark Sun's hand itself was a weapon! If he really did intercept the blow, with Dark Sun's strength and steel claws, his hand would certainly be torn to five pieces.

Elian had to quickly dodge, but Dark Sun wasn't like Zyle. How could he just allow Elian to dodge? Dark Sun immediately grabbed Elian with his other hand.

"Aaugh!"

Eliau shouted with pain. Dark Sun had grabbed his forearm. The steel claws abruptly punctured his arm. He moved and felt a surge of pain from flesh tearing.

At this moment, Dark Sun forcefully kicked Eliau's calf. Compared to Dark Sun's strengthened muscle and bone, Eliau's leg was as fragile as a child's. After a sharp snapping sound, Eliau half fell to the ground, in such pain that he was sweating all over.

"Dar....."

Eliau cried out Daren's nickname, hoping that he could call Daren back. He looked up towards Dark Sun's face and was stunned. He discovered that it wasn't Dark Sun's merciless demeanor there, but Daren's expression instead.

Daren's face was as pale as his silver-colored hair. Though there were no tears in his eyes, they were wide and staring. The whites were completely bloodshot and a vein pulsed in his forehead. It seemed as if he had become completely exhausted trying to restrain himself.

Seeing this, Eliau quieted. Dar was already trying so hard. Eliau knew that if he cried out, it would just increase Dar's suffering.

At that moment, Daren's hand twisted, dislocating Eliau's arm. Then he seized Eliau's neck and held up Eliau's entire body. Throughout the whole

process, Elian tolerated the pain without making a single sound, even though his lips were turning purple from the agony.

Right then, Eli attacked, flinging out an entire row of small knives. Not a single knife missed burying itself in the arm Daren was using to lift up Elian, forming a neat row. It was quite astonishing to look at.

Even after receiving such an attack, Daren's expression didn't change, but rather, it was Eli, the one who had launched the attack, who was startled. He had only wanted to force Daren to release his hold, but had no intention of actually hurting him.

Daren used his other hand to pluck out two knives. Upon seeing this, Eli reflexively tried to read Daren's thoughts, but accidentally was sucked into Daren's anguish. That had to come from a heart overflowing with pain. Eli nearly wanted to say something to comfort him. Although he was looking for information about the battle on hand, he wasn't able to glean any.

"Ugh!"

Eli fell down. Two of his own small knives were embedded in his knees..... Daren had thrown them back at their owner.

"Ah....."

At that moment, Elian, gasping for air and in pain, finally pulled a small knife out of Daren's arm. He hesitated for a moment, then stabbed it at Daren's palm.....

Daren immediately let go, causing Elian's attack to fail. Daren then turned around and kicked Elian off the stage. Elian lay on the ground, in a cold sweat from the pain. He desperately willed himself not to fall unconscious.

The fight only lasted around five minutes. Eloise still had not regained consciousness, Elian had been crushed single-handedly, and Eli's knees were severely damaged. The three of them had lost the fight.

In the midst of their agony, Elian and Eli happened to think the same thing: So strong! Compared to Dark Sun before, Dark Sun now seems to be more than twice as powerful!

Witnessing all this, Lance was extremely satisfied as he said, "Very good. It seems that in over a year, your moves have improved immensely. You undoubtedly are an exceptional, self-improving ultimate weapon."

By then, Daren was more than just trembling. He lowered his head to look at his body. It was entirely covered in blood. Most of the blood on his upper half was from when Eloise spat blood onto him. On his hands was Elian's blood.

Daren lifted his head and looked at Lance. Although he had a multitude of questions, he finally managed to force out one sentence: "Why?"

"Why?"

Lance elegantly shook his head. He smiled and said, "I'll ask you

instead. Why are you so powerful? This is because the person giving you orders has a different relationship with you. Devon has placed you under many restrictions not to fight, has he not? Or perhaps he did not actually order you, and merely mentioned it in conversations. But in regards to your microchip, those bans were all established. And so, they invisibly limited your behavior. Unless the matter was serious enough to impact Devon's safety, you would only be held under those restrictions, but they would not affect your strength."

Lance scowled and coldly said, "However, I want you to obey the mandate to battle with everything you have. Therefore, under my command, you have one-hundred percent of your strength."

After receiving these answers, Daren was silent for a moment. He turned around to ask another person, "Why, Zyle-ge?"

Zyle laughed. He extended his hand, felt around his face, and then ripped the skin off. Underneath wasn't a bloody mess, but another face that was much more familiar to Daren. It was..... Kyle's face.

"Kyle-ge....."

Daren's facial color turned even paler. So all along he and his brother had never escaped the control of their father?

Suddenly, Daren's figure vanished. When he reappeared, he was right behind Lance. His arm was raised across his chest. Five or six bullets were caught in his outstretched hand.

Kyle turned his head. He smoothly pulled out a gun and killed the person in the audience who had fired at Lance. When he looked towards Dark Sun, he could not help but praise him. "Truly impressive, Dark Sun. Before I even realized someone was launching a surprise attack, you had already stopped the bullets."

Lance unsurprisingly said, "That is because you are not a fighter. However, Dark Sun is the ultimate weapon. As long as I do not move against Devon, or as long as Devon does not order me to be killed, Dark Sun is my ultimate protector."

After he finished speaking, he glanced at the situation in the audience. Ninety percent of them had been knocked out by the modified humans disguised as attendants. Only a few people were left struggling to hide. He gave a cell phone to Kyle and said, "Time is running low. Zyle, make preparations. Dark Sun, render the remaining audience members unconscious."

Kyle nodded his head and immediately walked offstage.

After receiving orders, Daren also leaped off the stage and instantly locked on to the nearest target. He did not have the slightest hint of fear towards the bullets flying in all directions. Unless the bullet was headed towards his joints, he just ignored them. The bullets lodged in his flesh. To his strengthened muscle and bone, they could hardly be considered lethal, and afterwards, he could simply pluck them out.

In the past, he would have dodged to prevent Devon from growing upset when he saw the wounds. Now, he didn't even bother trying to evade them, because the person commanding him did not care whether or not he was injured.

He moved two steps, ripped out a convenient chair, and threw it towards the target. Although the target immediately ducked, and used a chair to shield himself, the chair had been thrown at him with such force that it actually crushed several nearby seats. The person hiding under the seat only made a stifled noise and didn't rise again.

After throwing a chair, Daren locked on to another target, and attacked again.....

While Daren was finishing off the people in the audience, Elian struggled to climb next to Eli's side. The pain from this effort left him drenched in sweat. Then he whispered, "What does Lance intend to do?"

At this moment, Eli's face was also ashen from the pain of his knee injuries. But he still shook his head and replied, "I don't know. Too many thoughts are intertwined together. His thought processes are just as complex as the Solaris Emperor's. I can't find an answer."

"Did you bring a cell phone?"

"I can't make a call. It's being interfered with." Eli shook his head. He had tried earlier.

Hearing this, Elian recalled that just now, Lance had told Dar to begin emitting radio interference. Since cell phones couldn't work anyway, why did Lance take away Dar's cell phone? What was he going to use it for?

Also, what did Lance want Kyle to prepare..... Could it have been that he

wanted to kill everyone?

That wasn't right! If he wanted to kill people, Daren was even stronger than Kyle. Since Lance wanted everyone to be knocked out, and hadn't ordered them to be killed, then it shouldn't be that he wanted them all dead.

"Clones....."

Elian turned his head to look at Eli and asked, "What did you say?"

"I don't know." Eli suppressed the pain and answered, "Lance's thoughts are mostly sandwiched between the words 'Clones' and 'Devon Solaris.'"

At this time, Daren had finished dealing with all the remaining people. He walked past Eli and overheard these words. Then he walked up onto the stage and returned to Lance's side. He looked at Lance. With a tone of realization, he said, "I really did kill Father. You aren't Father. Are you his clone?"

"You realized this?"

Lance's expression held a hint of a smile. He replied, "My body is that of a clone, but my brain is not. This 'Lance' has only existed for ten years. Though I planted this piece ten years ago, only recently did I recover this body to use. I had no other option. You already had ripped open a hole in my original body, so it was unusable."

Daren continued to stare at him and icily said, "Gege shot you in the

head."

"Didn't you also shoot that Yue Baylian person in the head?"

Lance flippantly responded, "And he used a microchip to replace his brain. What? Did you think that in this world, the only surgical genius was your Papa Avery? If you have the money, there are many geniuses available to you."

Daren remained silent. He just allowed the microchip in his brain to make a determination. The brain was the same, but the body was cloned. The DNA was completely the same..... It seemed he still had to listen to "Father's" orders.

Seeing Daren's expression grow more and more somber, Lance began laughing loudly. He turned around and spread his hands out towards the audience, as if he had put on a perfect performance before the world.

"What is a 'Daren Solaris' worth compared to money? You thing. You don't deserve to be cherished by my child! Solaris Emperor, you should not treasure anything! Anything or anyone can have a price placed upon them, as long as there will be enough profit. Looking down upon the whole world: This is the arrogance of a king!"

Daren heard a noise, and looked backwards. On stage, a white screen was being lowered, a white screen used for projections.

"Watch!"

Lance turned around. His hand gestured towards the image on the screen. He revealed a satisfied smile and he cried, "This is used to create the profit of perfect happiness!"

"Gege, Papa Avery, I'm back! I bought midnight snacks too! Gege and Papa, do you want to eat together?"

Eclipse Hunter v05c2 - [Father, if not related by blood, can you not love your children?]

"...Let the show begin!"

Lance laughed for a long time. He laughed until he almost couldn't breathe. He then said, "Did you see that? Hm? Devon never really needed you! What he needed was only a younger brother to call his family. Whether or not that younger brother is you, is of no importance."

"It's not like that!"

Daren was still wordlessly staring at the screen. It was actually Elian, who was lying on the floor, that roared, "That was just a brief moment! That isn't Dar and the Solaris Emperor will figure it out sooner or later! They'll figure out something's wrong. Robots can never be human, just like DSII!"

Lance languidly said, "So? Did you think that was DSII? DSII was just a failed experiment that paved the path."

He then introduced the Daren Solaris on screen, "This is DSX, the ultimate clone. Every aspect of it is exactly the same as Dark Sun. Furthermore, the microchip in its brain and the microchip in Dark Sun's brain are interconnected. He will receive the behaviors of 'Daren Solaris' from this year onward, analyze them, and then copy them. At the moment, DSX can perfectly play the role of 'Daren Solaris.' The only difference between him and Daren Solaris is that he cannot commit any errors that may harm his master."

Lance looked towards Daren. He said slowly and deliberately, "Compared to Dark Sun and Daren Solaris, DSX is far superior. Therefore, your existence is completely..."

"Bullshit! Dar would never hurt his brother. He..." Elian shouted, interrupting Lance.

"But he has indeed harmed Devon!" Lance was even more unyielding as he roared back. "As long as this devil's spawn is not there, my Sun King will not have a weakness! The existence of this demon child is a type of harm in itself!"

Even as the two people bellowed their arguments, Daren was still staring at the video that was being projected. In the video, there were three people happily eating together. He originally should have been one of them, but there was now someone else in his place.

"However, just a bit of what you are saying is true."

Elia was stunned. He didn't expect that Lance would say something like that.

"After all, DSX isn't human." Lance smiled as he said, "When an incident he has never encountered occurs, DSX will be unable to perform the appropriate action because he has never had a precedent. However, this is inconsequential. Dark Sun will be constantly looking through DSX's eyes, watching the Solaris Emperor. When DSX does not know which action he should take, he will issue a query to Dark Sun. Dark Sun will then 'advise him' on which action to take."

Elia froze. Dar would be looking through DSX's eyes to watch?

"DSX will be by the Solaris Emperor's side, protecting him. As for Dark Sun, he will be with me. He will be the embodiment of the Solaris Emperor's underground guardian, helping him remove all obstacles. As a result, the devil's spawn can no longer do harm to the Solaris Emperor, and would even be his greatest assistant."

Thereupon, Lance fanatically gazed at the Devon on the screen. He cried, "Look. Isn't this all perfect?"

This lunatic... Elia suppressed the impulse to curse at him. He then loudly reminded this madman. "Dar is also your child! You are sacrificing Daren for the sake of the success of the Solaris Emperor."

Hearing this, Lance suddenly scowled. He glared at Elia, who was sprawled on the floor, for a long time before he slowly said, "Even after you have seen the opera, you still believe he is my child?"

The opera? Elia abruptly recalled the contents of the opera. The mother was abducted by the demon, and when she was thrown back, she was pregnant with the demon's child... It can't really be like this?

Dar isn't Lance's child. So, he and the Solaris Emperor are... brothers of the same mother but different fathers?

No wonder the two brothers looked so different from one another. No wonder Lance never loved Dar... Elia figured out the circumstances

surrounding the situation, and couldn't help but smile bitterly. This time, Dar will once again be hurt. He actually wasn't his father's child, and his so-called Gege, is only half his Gege.

Thinking up to this point, he looked towards Daren. The latter's line of sight had long been directed back towards Lance. However, the expression on his face wasn't of shock but instead was a blank expression. It seemed as if he still hadn't fully reacted yet.

"What? You don't have any words you want to voice?" Lance narrowed his eyes with some suspicion. Daren's reaction was too calm.

Even after hearing that, Daren seemingly still hadn't recovered yet. He was in a daze for a long while, so long that Lance began having some doubts. Suddenly, Daren looked towards Lance. He hesitated for a moment, then opened his mouth to say, "You don't love me because I'm not your child? Instead, you hate me?"

"If you're not my child, why would I need to love you?"

Lance howled in rage, "What are you? My blood does not flow in you. Why do you call yourself part of the Solaris family?! Only I am the master of the Solaris family. Only my child is worthy of the title Solaris Emperor!"

Hearing this, Daren grew paler by a whole shade. Only after a long while, did he reply with an "Oh."

Receiving this type of lukewarm answer, Lance coldly snorted. Having failed to deal a blow to Daren, he felt extremely dissatisfied.

Elian was also a bit surprised. Daren's reaction was beyond his expectations. It seemed too insipid, too detached, and unlike the emotionally vulnerable Dar.

"Elian-ge, Eli."

Daren turned his head and called out, drawing the two people's attention. Elian watched him, and the longer he watched, the more he felt that something was wrong. Daren's attitude was too calm. This calmness along with that pallid face was capable of making everyone feel unsettled. It was as if Daren was trapped in the middle of a huge ocean and had already fallen into complete despair. As a result, he had stopped struggling and allowed himself so slowly sink down... until he finally drowned.

Looking at the injured trio, Daren could only desperately apologize. "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. From the start, I shouldn't have come in contact with all of you. I shouldn't have come to know all of you. I've always harmed everyone and got you all involved in dangerous situations."

Elian frowned. He didn't look towards Daren, but instead looked towards Eli with a puzzled expression. If it was Daren's thoughts, Eli should be able to uncover them.

Eli murmured, "Protect Gege. Protect Elian-ge. Protect Eli. Protect Eloise....."

Speaking up until there, he hesitated for a moment. Eventually, he still said the last thought he had discovered, "Protect Father."

Protect Father? Elian was shocked. How could it be? Or did Father refer to Theodore Avery? But Dar calls him "Papa Avery," not Father.

To the side, Lance hadn't missed hearing Eli's words, but he didn't pay any heed to them. The devil's spawn wanted to protect him? Ha!

He icily said, "Dark Sun. These three people should die."

This time, Daren did not immediately attack. He turned his head to look at Lance, explaining, "Eli can read minds, which would be very useful to you. Elian and Eloise are the only things you can use as bargaining chips to keep Eli obedient."

Upon hearing this, Lance frowned. His plan had no areas that required reading people's minds. However, hearing that he could discover what was in other people's hearts, what person wouldn't be tempted?

"Even if it's the brilliant DSX, it is impossible to say for certain that he won't trigger Gege's suspicions." Daren calmly said, "If you have Eli, you can ascertain whether or not he is growing suspicious. Also, you can know what is on your favorite child's mind. Isn't that enough to spare these three people?"

At that instant, even Lance felt something was strange. What sort of matter was Daren's unnatural tranquility? His eyes narrowed dangerously. He asked with suspicion, "What are you scheming, demon child?"

Daren shook his head, slowly saying, "Nothing, I just want to protect

everyone. I have to stay strong."

Hearing this, Elian reflexively looked at Eli. He wanted to see if Eli had discovered what Dar was thinking. However, he discovered the always expressionless Eli had two tracks of tears flowing down his face.

"Eli?" Elian's voice was a little strange as he asked. What's going on? First, Dar became abnormally calm. Now, the always calm Eli is in tears?

Eli hurriedly wiped away the tears. He glanced over and threw out a sentence. "My knee was just hurting too much."

Lance coldly laughed. He said, "Do not attempt to deceive me. Now, Dark Sun. Turn off all emotional functions, including facial expression and body movement."

"From today onward, you must not leave my side. Other than protecting me and executing my commands, you are not permitted to perform any other actions. Additionally, I am not even in the slightest interested in your feelings, so you do not need any emotional responses."

"Understood." Daren's expression vanished and was immediately replaced by Dark Sun's merciless and uncaring expression.

Seeing this, Elian grew even more despairingly. He could only look towards the projection screen and at the three happy people. Then he prayed in his heart, Solaris Emperor, Mr. Avery, discover this soon! That isn't the Dar you love, only a robot!

Following Lance, they arrived at the opera house's basement. What was below ground was even more astonishing than what was above ground.

Underneath the grandiose opera house was actually one huge laboratory... No! Using "laboratory" was too narrow of a description. This place was just like a school. Many people were moving about. Each person was wearing white and in every classroom, the people in white were wearing headsets and watching the screens in front of them. The screens broadcasted videos of people that looked exactly like them, doing all sorts of things.

However, there was one thing that was completely different from a school, the silence. This place was packed with people, but it was so quiet that even the drop of a pin would make a clear sound.

Daren was carrying Elian's trio over his shoulder. When they arrived at the basement of the opera house, the first thing they noticed were these strange sights.

Many of these people looked a bit familiar. Elian and Eli's faces went pale with shock. In the midst of the white-clothed people, they saw the faces of the audience members who had just been defeated by the modified humans and Dark Sun in the opera house earlier...

Lance turned around, clearly wanting to face Dark Sun's expression as he spoke. However, Dark Sun had no trace of an expression at all causing Lance to feel somewhat disappointed. Then, he noticed Elian and Eli's stunned expressions. Smiling with satisfaction, he said, "Isn't this magnificent? Ten years ago, I had the idea of taking the DNA of every person in a high position, or even potential politicians and business tycoons, and establishing this underground cloning capital. Long before

that Theodore Avery guy conducted his Dark Sun experiment, the plan to clone humans was already in motion."

He was extremely proud as he declared, "This cloning capital is my gift to my child, my true gift. Dark Sun was merely a small bonus prize."

"You... You..." Elian already had somewhat guessed what this person intended to do. Nevertheless, those words meant that this man was even more insane than what he had imagined.

"What you're thinking isn't wrong."

Lance slowly said, "I want to replace all influential and powerful people. All of those appearing to be enemies of the Solaris Emperor will actually be under my control. They will be completely unable to harm my child!"

"You really are mad!"

In the end, Elian couldn't help yelling at him. "You believe that the Solaris Emperor would appreciate the things you are doing? I'll tell you, if he was here, he would also be calling you a madman!"

Upon hearing this, Lance scowled. He said despondently, "Children never understand or appreciate the sacrifices their parents make for them."

Following that, he appeared more at ease. Relaxed, he said, "However, there's no need to worry. He is my only beloved child. For him, sacrificing even more would still be all right. Even if he never knows of the sacrifices

I've made for him, I will accept that condition willingly. Because I am a father, silently supporting my child from behind, and devoting everything I have to him."

Seeing Lance's expression of saintly sacrifice, Elian was speechless. He suddenly started feeling grateful towards his own old man, who fortunately hadn't "loved" him as much as this.

Lance put away his passionate expression and returned to a cool, self-restrained appearance. He offhandedly drew the attention of a few white-clothed people and asked them some questions. Then under some orders again, the people in white hastily left.

Seemingly talking to himself, he said, "It appears as if it still needs some more time to be prepared. However, there's nothing to worry about. Tomorrow's news will be published as 'Five hundred influential politicians and businessmen were enraptured by the singing of the world's number one singer, Lance. They listened to encore after encore until they finally returned home at dawn.'"

Lance turned around to look at Elian's trio. He indifferently said, "You three are troublesome. You invited yourselves in midway, not even allowing me the time to prepare replicas. However, this is of no matter. In this day and age, if three people die silently in an alleyway, even if the murderer isn't found, no one would grow suspicious."

Hearing this, Elian's heart sank. He had no doubt whether Lance would kill them or not. For the sake of keeping his child in absolute power, to the point of being insane enough to actually replace five hundred people with clones, would this kind of guy possibly care about the lives of a mere three people?

"Dark Sun, come with me."

But Lance did not issue the order to kill them. He only ordered Dark Sun to go with him. After he issued this command, he turned around. They didn't walk for long before they arrived at a room where Lance allowed the machine by the door to scan over his irises. After, the door opened.

"Go in."

Daren carried the three people into the room. Since Eli and Eloise were both on his shoulders, he was leaning backwards. Therefore, only Elian, who was being clamped underneath Daren's arm, could lift his head up to survey the room.

The entire room was like an impregnable fortress. One wall was completely black. From its appearance, it should be a screen, though at the moment it was off, and therefore its display was dark.

The other three walls were cold, entirely metal walls. The only thing surrounded by these metal walls was a table for people to lie on. It appeared to be a table like the ones used in experiments. Around and above the table was densely crowded with gauges and piping.

Lance watched Dark Sun with great interest, and began commenting. "Later, this will be the place you will stay when you have no tasks. There are two modified humans in the corner, both with medical treatment programs installed in them. They will be responsible for treating your injuries."

"Food will be sent once a day. Once the time comes, the wall will automatically open up a window to send in food. Also, using the toilet is the same, an opening will appear in the floor over there."

He deliberately said the instructions particularly slow and clear.

Bedroom? This is just like a prison... Elia's blood ran cold.

"The screen before you will project whatever DSX sees. When he has a moment of confusion, he will directly send a query through the microchip and you must answer. Do you understand?"

"Understood," Daren mechanically replied. With regard to this prison-like room, he did not reveal even the slightest expression. Just as Lance commanded, he did not display any emotion at all.

Lance walked forward a few steps, up behind Dark Sun, and lightly lifted up several silver strands of hair, saying, "Even allowing you to see your beloved Gege, I feel that can be counted as very merciful. Even though you are the child of the person I hate the most... the child of that person!"

That person... Lance tightly gripped Dark Sun's silvery hair. If the silver strands weren't Dark Sun's out of the ordinary hair, much of it probably would have long been torn off.

But this wasn't enough to vent the resentment in his heart. He turned Dark Sun around, and upon seeing Dark Sun's beautiful face, he was

furious enough that it seemed as if fire would shoot from his eyes.

This made Elian feel very uneasy. Even if Daren isn't his child, is it necessary to hate him this much?

Lance was so enraged that his entire body shook. He glared at Dark Sun's face, and grabbed Dark Sun's chin with his hand. He snarled, "You bitch! I even if I gave something to you, you wouldn't want it. You always chose to run off with him! If it is like this, I won't love you anymore! However, I won't let you go either!"

After he finished his shout, he slapped Dark Sun. His facial features were distorted hideously. He only thought of unleashing all of his fury on that damned face.

Seeing this rage startled Elian, but he couldn't say anything. If a person was this furious, speaking out would most likely make the violence continue much longer.

After striking Daren several more times, Lance finally stopped. He gasped for air for a moment, then after shaking out his hand, the distorted look on his face disappeared without a trace. Only an icy expression remained as he said, "You truly are a worthy cyborg. Hitting you has only caused my hand to hurt."

You bastard... Elian had to bite his lip so his criticism wouldn't spill out.

"Dark Sun. If you do not have an order from me, you are not allowed to take a single step out of this bedroom. As for the other three people, if

they leave this room, kill them.”

After he finished speaking, Lance exited the room. The door shut and the interior of the room was completely dark. There were no lights.

The screen also continued to stay dark. At this late hour, DSX was presumably already asleep. His closed eyes would naturally be a dark screen.

At this moment, Elian felt he was being placed on the table. Then Daren's voice came from the darkness.

“Eli. Sit for now. After Elian's treatment, it will be your turn.”

Eli just made an “Nn” sound.

Daren began treating the wounds on Elian's body. Elian only felt a prick. After that, the pain in his body gradually disappeared. Thinking about it, he probably had been injected with something like a painkiller.

Daren bandaged his wounds silently.

“Dar?”

Elian couldn't help but ask with worry, “Are you okay? If it really is unbearable, don't endure it. It's okay to even cry.”

At that moment, Daren mechanically said, "I cannot defy father's command, I can't have any expression. I can't..."

Just then, Elian suddenly hugged Daren's head and held it tightly against his chest. He quietly murmured, "It's okay, it's okay. Then, I'll help cry for you. However, when I cry, it's very unsightly. You're not allowed to sneak a peek, okay?"

Daren kept silent and did not reply.

With his chin against the top of Daren's head, Elian didn't need to hold in his emotions. Drop after drop slid down his chin, falling onto the other person's head, in place of the person who couldn't allow his grief to flow out.

"Why is it that ever since I've met you, you've encountered such sad things?"

"No matter what happened in your past, you're only a sixteen-year old child. Why do you have to endure these things?"

Elian quietly choked out, "This is too unfair. It's too cruel..."

After that, he didn't open his mouth to say anymore. He just cried in place of the person who couldn't. After some time, Dark Sun gently pushed Elian away and continued treating his wounds.

"I'll save you all. I definitely will."

Elian froze. That voice was Eli's... No, was it the voice of Dar's heart?

From far in the distance, Ezart saw that guy, Daren, standing in front of the door to his own house. As usual, Daren had a look on his face that said he had been waiting for him.

This brat doesn't change at all! Ezart walked over, and without stopping, threw out the sentence, "Let's go!"

"Good morning... w-wait for me, Ezart!"

Daren hurriedly caught up to him. Only when he had jogged up alongside Ezart did he slow down his footsteps. He casually chatted with Ezart. "You were really late today! Did you fight in the arena yesterday and overslept?"

"Nope!" Ezart lazily replied, "Ever since I drank your old man's drug, none of the opponents that come are interesting. One punch and they fly off! It's really boring. I'm going to wait until I run out of money before I go fight again."

Daren made an "Oh" sound.

"How was it yesterday?" Ezart glanced at him, saying oddly, "I thought after you guys finished listening to songs, you would definitely find Elian and me to go eat midnight snacks. I waited half the night. Actually, I didn't wait at all. That would have been weird."

"I wasn't listening to songs, I was listening to an opera!" Daren immediately corrected.

"Whatever! How was it?"

"When I came home last night, I didn't go to eat midnight snacks." Daren explained matter-of-factly, "If I came back home too late, Gege would worry."

Ezart rolled his eyes, and irritably said, "Your older brother worries too much. He's always nagging... Speaking of which, Elian is no better. He was the one that told you to go home early, right?"

Daren paused for a moment and shook his head. "It wasn't! I wanted to go home."

Ezart made an "Oh" sound and stopped asking further.

When the two people passed by the toy shop, the store clerk suddenly ran out like a whirlwind, apologizing, "Sir, the model you ordered before, you can pick it up this evening. My boss wanted me to apologize to you first. We ended up spending additional time because it was difficult to find the ruby for the button."

"What model?" Ezart asked with unusual curiosity. He and Dar always walked to and from school together, but he hadn't seen Daren order any models.

"A model of my brother." After Daren finished his explanation, he turned his head to say to the clerk, "When I pass by tomorrow morning, I'll collect it on my way."

"Alright then." The clerk respectfully replied.

"Why the hell would you make a model of your brother?" Ezart stared at him.

"Wearing it would make me happy!" Daren explained with a wide smile.

"You nutcase!" Ezart criticized, "Can't you see your brother when you go home everyday? Why would you want to make a necklace of him to wear on you?"

"That's because, because..."

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Speaking until then, Daren suddenly froze. He stayed silent for several seconds, then opened his mouth to explain. "That's because before, when I was arguing with Gege, Gege just used unpleasant expressions to look at me. I wanted to see his smile. So I wanted a model of him smiling made. That way I can always see Gege smile."

Ezart was stunned. He hadn't thought that Daren would explain in such detail. For a moment, he didn't know what he should say back. He could only scratch his head and say, "Oh, but your brother will smile at you now, so wouldn't that necklace be useless?"

Daren tilted his head and replied, "You're right! But it has already been

made, so there isn't anything I can do."

"Can't you return it?" Ezart glanced at the toy shop clerk. He haltingly said, "Isn't there that... right! Seven day trial period?"

"This..."

The shop clerk suddenly broke out into a cold sweat. But this is custom-made merchandise, and has already been completed. What seven day trial period? Replying "It's not allowed" should be a matter-of-fact. However, when the person being replied to can crush concrete with a single foot, replying "no" doesn't seem to be so matter-of-fact anymore.

Just then, Daren suddenly flew into a rage. He shoved Ezart with one hand and seized the shop clerk with the other, roaring, "You can't return it! That's my model! It's mine!"

Ezart and the shop clerk were both startled, especially the clerk. He had witnessed Ezart and Daren arguing until they had pulverized the floor. He was so scared that his whole body was rigid. He didn't dare to move, fearing that his fate would be the same as that of the flooring.

"Dar!"

Ezart placed a hand on Daren's shoulder. Puzzled, he tried to advise Daren, saying, "Why are you so worked up? If you don't want to return it, then don't return it. There's no need for an outburst, right?"

Daren froze, then released the clerk. He apologized. "I'm sorry. I was too

excited. I don't want to return it. Please allow me to keep the model you made."

Quivering, the shop clerk replied, "Al-Alright. Thank you for v-visiting." After he finished speaking, he swiftly darted into the toy store.

At that instant, Ezart looked Daren up and down, asking, "Dar, is something wrong?"

Daren shook his head, and explained, "It's very important to me, so I got very excited over it."

Ezart scratched his head, muttering, "Just say it's important. Why get so upset..."

After he finished complaining, he shrugged his shoulders and left it alone.

"Okay." Daren nodded.

Ezart stared blankly and asked, "Okay what?"

"If it's important, I'll just say so. So later, I'll just say so and won't get overexcited again."

Daren explained, smiling broadly. This made Ezart stunned. In his heart, he had a strange feeling he couldn't situate. Was Dar this brainless... anyway, he is always an idiot! But, saying it like this, doesn't it seem like

there's nothing wrong? He scratched his head again, unable to figure out what was so strange.

"Ezart, you've been scratching your head for a while! Has it been a long time since you've washed your hair?"

"...You're the one who hasn't washed your hair!"

"I did wash it! I wash it every day! Even though my hair doesn't need to be washed, Gege says I need to be like an ordinary boy, so I always wash my hair."

Ezart stared blankly.

"That's right! Your hair's fake and can even turn it into a plasma weapon..." Speaking until then, he couldn't help but reach out to feel Daren's silver hair. He clicked his tongue with amazement. "How the hell do they make this hair? It's just like the real thing!"

"They put it in one strand at a time!" Daren said naturally.

Ezart frowned and asked, "Does this hurt?"

Daren shook his head, saying, "It doesn't hurt. When they were transplanting the hair, they injected anesthetics."

"I meant... whatever!" Ezart paused for a moment, then waved his hand, saying, "Let's go! Let's go! You're going to be late to school."

"Oh, okay."

The two of them quickened their pace.

Along the way, Ezart suddenly thought of something. He asked, "Are you still protecting that singer guy today?"

"Mhm."

"Tell Eloise to meet me at the combat simulator at about one or two."

Daren suddenly stopped walking. He turned his head to look at Ezart, hesitating.

"What is it?" Puzzled, Ezart also stopped walking. He asked, "Eloise is just peeping from the classroom next door. Walking over to tell her isn't a problem, right?"

Daren thought for a moment and shook his head. He replied, "Nope."

"Is there something wrong with your brain today? Your responses are so slow!" Ezart rolled his eyes.

Daren hurriedly apologized. "I'm sorry! I will improve in the future."

Hearing this, Ezart frowned. He said, "Let's go," and then left with big

strides.

"Okay."

Daren hurriedly caught up.